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THE BOY VOYAGERS

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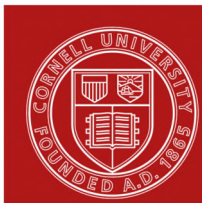

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THE

BOY VOYAGERS

OR ;

THE PIRATES OF THE EAST

BY

ANNE BOWMAN

GEORGE ROBERTSON & CO.
(Proprietary, Limited)
MELBOURNE, SYDNEY, ADELAIDE AND BRISBANE
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PREFACE.

CUSTOM, rather than necessity, requires that the first page of a new book should be occupied by an *Introduction*. It is hopeless to expect that this unnecessary introduction should be always read; but, perhaps, among the young friends who have honoured me by approving of the volumes I have previously published, some may commence this by turning to the usually neglected page; to them I promise a story which shall introduce them to new scenes and new characters, and which I earnestly hope may be received as favourably as "Esperanza," or any of my former publications, which have all passed into more hands than even my most sanguine hopes dared to calculate on.

Nor do I fear that the interest and amusement my readers may feel in the work will be all the benefit

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they may derive from it. I trust that the seeds of instruction it contains may, in due season, produce some good fruit; and that, while reading the history of my two heroes, the adventurous and undisciplined may be led to reflect that a rash and premature plunge into independence, with its perils and heavy responsibilities, is an unprofitable change from the short and wholesome trials of school life which form the safe foundation of honour, prosperity, and happiness.

A. B.

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THE BOY VOYAGERS

CHAPTER I.

The Discontented School-boys—Merton School Life—Projected Rebellion—An Investment of Capital—A Geographical Difficulty—The sad fate of the Swiss Robinson—The Battle of the Orders—The Honest Avowal.

"Now then; whimpering again!" said Frank Freeman to his school-fellow and friend, Walter Thornville—"What in the world has gone wrong now? A fine sight, to see a Merton lad crying like a school-girl! What a little soft fool you are!"

"I'm not a fool, Freeman," answered Walter: "you know very well I'm not a fool; but I hate this school, and am quite miserable. Everybody is so cross, and unjust, and tyrannical. Cameron never believes that I do my exercises myself; the young lads laugh at me and mock me, and the big fellows are worse than those slave-drivers in 'Uncle Tom.' I wish somebody would write a book about them."

"A great deal of good that would do, you fancy, you little green muff," said Freeman; "why, the big fellows always will crow over the little fellows at every school. It's all right, man; your turn will come; and then you can flap your wings and peck as you like."

"But I shouldn't like it," said the pining boy; "I don't want to flap my wings and crow, Freeman. Do

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you think I could find in my heart to thrust pins into a little boy, or pull his ears till they bled, or make him sleep in such cold weather as this without blankets as that brute Hamilton does?"

"Never you care for Hamilton," said Frank, laughing. "Be plucky, old man, and row him well; and when he robs you of your blankets, cover yourself, as other fellows do, with your coat and cloak; besides, you have a capital railway-rug down in the hall, worth a couple of blankets. You're not half so ill off as I am; for you have money, and plenty of clothes, and a comfortable home to fall back on."

"Not a home, Freeman," answered Walter. "I can never feel at home in the house of papa's agent. To be sure the house is fine enough. They give you plenty to eat, and there's nobody to prig your blankets; but ever since papa went back to India I have had the life of a dog among those Horners. The lads are so impertinent—Etonians they call themselves,—and give themselves such airs; they think there is a world of Etonians, and all the rest of the world outside are snobs."

"Then why did not your papa send you with them to Eton?" asked Freeman.

"Because he chose me to be one of the outside snobs," replied Walter. "He is a great merchant himself, and he wants his son to be a merchant like him: so he thought I should be spoiled among the young nobles; but I have often been sorry he didn't try me. You know I have a hard life here. First I am laughed at by the fellows for knowing things they don't care for—botany and chemistry, and natural history; and next I'm rowed by the masters because I'm not well up in Greek, and am so slow over those weary sums in long division. Then I'm a milksop, and a spooney, and a little sneak, with the big fellows; and you know, Freeman, I'm not a coward; but I like to read quietly; and I hate foot-ball, with all its senseless riot, and I will not join in it."

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"But you ought to join, man," said Frank, "or you'll have a dog's life, I'll tell you. They are a set of vulgar, purse-proud tyrants here, I know. I've roughed it till I'm sick of them; but what can I do? I have no home, no parents, no money; and my hard uncle grudges even the money paid for my education; and as to pocket-money, there's not a fellow in the school but you, Wally, that knows how badly I'm off. Then look at my shabby clothes, which these fellows have the impudence to laugh at me about. It's only by hard fighting that I keep them down, and save you from being quite worried."

"I know you do, Freeman," said Walter; "I would tell papa all my troubles; but that mean Cameron reads all our letters. How I wish we could get to dear papa. I know he would not be a bit vexed to see us both in India. Couldn't we run away, Freeman? What a lark it would be."

"I've had that dodge long enough in my head, Wally," said his friend, "if I'd had any place to run to. But without a penny in my pocket, or any means of earning a living, it would be little good for a poor friendless dog like me to fly from bad to worse."

"But you are not friendless, Freeman," said Walter, earnestly. "You and I will be friends as long as we live; and so, do let us think of going off. I shall get a good lot of money from papa, before midsummer; that would be useful, you know; but I don't know how to set about getting to Calcutta. You are clever about contriving plans, and know a good deal about seaports and ships. Will you make inquiries and draw up a plan for our frolic? To be sure, it wants three months till we break up, and that's a long time to bear our slavery; but, if we have it all planned and agreed, we can talk about it, and that will make the time slip over. Now, let me see your Latin verses, I think I can mend them; and do tell me how often 29 will go in £187. 17*s*. 10$\frac{3}{4}$*d*. These fractions make my head

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ache, and I see no good in spending so much time in working them out: I would rather lose the farthings in a bargain than have the labour of calculating the division of them."

"Nay, that would never do in business transactions, Wally," replied Frank; "it would shake the very principle of money-dealing. Come, and I will show you a simple way to unravel these difficulties, by attacking them at the very root."

Frank Freeman was fourteen years old; but he was not a clever scholar. At the village school, from which he had been transferred to Merton, the classics were not taught; but he had worked his way through volumes of arithmetical calculations, and was never puzzled by figures. He was a daring, honest, warm-hearted youth, but full of the errors incidental to a neglected education; and he might have become a hard character, but for his acquaintance with Walter Thornville, to whom he clung with an affection he had never felt towards any human being since the death of his parents. This affection was lavishly returned by the gentle, studious, indulged boy, who had been reared in the lap of luxury, and who, now but twelve years of age, shrunk, with repugnance and terror, from all the petty, wholesome trials of school-boy life.

The wild project of escaping from their thraldom, broached half in jest at first, became the favourite, and almost the sole subject of conversation between the two friends. Though so differently constituted, they had both a large share of the spirit of romantic adventure, which had been fostered by their attachment to that branch of literature so charming to boys,—Voyages and Travels. Then Freeman had really a hard and miserly guardian, and felt that he was unjustly treated; and Walter pined for the luxuries, the devoted attention, and the undivided affection, to which he had been accustomed in the house of his

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father. He could not endure the republicanism of a school life; he was no longer Master Thornville; and he complained to Freeman, that, like a prisoner in the mines of Siberia, he was only distinguished by his number. He was just third of the fourth form.

"Don't you think, Frank," said he to his friend in one of their conversations, "that we might be beginning to collect stores for our voyage? I shall have, of course, to go to Portman-square at Easter; and you cannot think how much I dislike it. Mr. and Mrs. Horner do not care a bit for me; they are polite just to oblige papa; the girls take no notice of me, and the boys ridicule and tease me. It is even worse than Merton, where I have you to talk to. But there is one good thing, Frank, I can get some useful things when I am there; first, I think of buying a gun."

"A gun, man!" exclaimed Freeman. "What in the world do you want with a gun on a voyage to India? You might just as well provide saddles and bridles in case we should want to ride out on our way."

"But consider, Frank, we might be cast away like Robinson Crusoe, and then how useful we should find it," said he.

"Hold your tongue, simpleton," said Frank, laughing. "Whoever is cast away nowadays in such a regular hum-drum voyage? It's a chance we see land before we reach India, unless we could afford a passage in a first-rate steamer, and that we must not think of. And then, even if we should touch at the Cape, or at the Mauritius, I suspect you would have no use for your gun, unless you chose to shoot a brace or two of your fellow-creatures."

"Well, Freeman, I dare say you know best," replied Walter, in a disappointed tone; "but I must say I should have liked a gun; and in all the adventures I ever read, the people had guns. What would you advise me to buy, then? Shall I get a book on naviga-

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tion, with a compass, and some other nautical instruments?"

"The captain won't call on us to navigate his ship," said Frank; "and we have hard work enough without setting about the study of navigation. Not but what I am up in the theory a bit—my old village schoolmaster taught me to work equations and that sort of thing; but I don't expect I should come out strong among real sailors. No, Wally, if we do cut off, you will have to come down with the cash; and, my dear lad, I doubt it will take a lot: all we can raise; so never think of wasting any on chronometers and compasses. But mind you look about you, and pick up all you can about vessels and the cost of passage; and take care you don't look guilty and make people suspect what you're about. I have a bolder face for a bad action, if I could have got off, but I'm a fixture here; holidays never come to me; so you look sharp, old man, and bring off some useful hints for us."

But though Walter spent ten days in town, and had money and liberty, he did not accomplish much for the great cause, for he was little accustomed to independent action. It was only the day before his return, when he was assured that the Horners would be absent for some hours, that he ventured out to a shop which had long attracted his attention, where ready-made clothes were exposed for sale. On two complete sailors' dresses of rough material he had often cast a longing eye, and he now took the opportunity of purchasing them. Then he took courage, and asked the man of the shop if he could tell him the cost of a cabin passage to Calcutta. The man looked with suspicion on the young, delicate school-boy, named a fabulous sum that made Walter tremble, and requested to know where he should send the clothes.

"I saw by the man's face," said Walter, as he told the story to his friend, "that he meant to tell of me, so I said to him I would carry the parcel myself. Such

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a load it was! but when I turned out of the street, I got a cab and drove to the back entrance to Mr. Horner's; then I stole up the stable-yard with my great bundle, and as all the men were luckily out with the carriage, I got into the house unperceived; hurried to my own room, and squeezed the clothes into my portmanteau without any one suspecting me. Don't you think I managed cleverly, Frank?"

"You made the best of it," answered he, "but you paid far too much for your bargain; and, anyhow, we had better have got the things at Liverpool, as we shall certainly have to start from thence, and in some trading vessel. We never shall be able to raise money to pay our passage in a first-class steamer; not that I believe that fellow's assertion that it would cost us a hundred pounds each."

After the dresses had been inspected and fitted on with great approbation, they were carefully locked up in Walter's large portmanteau till the important hour arrived; and then the two boys could think and talk of nothing but their charming plan. Lessons became daily more and more irksome, punishments were frequent, Latin and Greek fell into utter neglect, and their schoolfellows even sent them to Coventry for their unsocial habits, and for shirking all sports, that they might be continually talking over their project. Geography was the only study that could engage their attention, and Walter especially enjoyed it, and regarded with intense interest the great South Atlantic, and that island-crowded Indian Ocean, so full of delightful associations, which he hoped he should soon be sailing over.

"Which of these islands do you think, sir, is that on which the Swiss family lived so long?" asked he of Mr. Landmann, the geography master.

"If you know the latitude and longitude of the place," said the master, impatiently, "what difficulty can there be in finding it? You can never be at the

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trouble of working a thing out for yourself. What Swiss family do you allude to? I never heard of them."

"I will bring the book to show you to-morrow, sir," answered Walter; "but I do not remember that the latitude and longitude of the island are given."

So the next day, when Walter went up to his lesson in geography, he took his beloved Swiss Robinson in his hand. Mr. Cameron, the second master, was talking to Mr. Landmann at the time, and when he saw Walter, whom he looked upon as an idle and inattentive boy, and for whom he had in consequence no great love, he snatched the book from his hand, demanding how he dared have the audacity to bring his idle tale-books to read in school-hours; and, without waiting for any reply, flung the book into the fire. Unable to see, without extreme sorrow, the destruction of his favourite book, Walter burst into tears, and Freeman sprung forward to rescue it; but Cameron seized his collar, threw him back, and struck him with his cane.

"You have no right to strike me now, sir," said Freeman, "I am not under you in geography hours."

Enraged at this rebellious speech, and still further exasperated by a low hissing which rose generally at the sight of the wanton sacrifice of a book which was nearly worn out by frequent perusal, especially by the younger boys, among whom it had been generously circulated, Cameron struck Frank again and again, and Walter sobbed louder and louder. The noise reached the ears of Dr. Markham, who walked up to learn the cause of the unusual commotion, and seeing Walter in tears, said—

"What are you crying for, Thornville? are you such a baby as to weep for punishment?"

"No, sir, I never cry for a caning," answered the boy; "but, if you please, sir, I could not bear to see my Swiss Robinson burnt."

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The doctor turned a look of regret towards the blazing leaves, as if he, too, had a liking to the victim; but he continued,

"No doubt you deserved to forfeit your pleasant book. I conclude you were reading it instead of learning your task."

"If you please, sir, I had never opened it," replied he; "I only brought it to show to Mr. Landmann, that he might point out to me the 'Happy Island' on the map; and Freeman got licked for trying to take it off the fire."

"Then Freeman was wrong to interfere," said the doctor; but there was a faint smile on his face, mingled with a slight expression of annoyance, as, in turning away, he glanced at the angry countenance of Cameron, who yet stood over the stubborn Freeman with his uplifted cane, ready to repeat the blows. But the doctor said to him, "There is a passage in one of the exercises, Mr. Cameron, I should like you to see; can I trouble you to come with me?" and led away the reluctant master.

When school was over, and the events of the morning had been discussed in the play-ground; "You'll hear no more of this, Freeman," said one of his classmates; "Cameron would get a rowing for his tyranny, depend on it, only the doctor must uphold his police force in public."

"That won't save Thornville's book," said Freeman, "nor make me forget the disgrace of the coward's blows. I can stand the doctor's crotchety ways, because he is a gentleman; but Cameron is a snob and a sneaking tyrant."

"You fourth form fellows must put up with your grievances," said Hamilton, contemptuously. "You should try to work your way up into a better set; you are old enough, I should say."

"Old enough and stout enough to hold my own in this field, against all of my own size," answered Free-

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man, though perhaps a shade or two behind some of you in classics. Never mind; wait a bit, and I hope we shall measure our strength together fairly."

"Whenever you like my fine fellow," drawled Hamilton. "Even now, if you will have a thrashing; though it will be somewhat *infra dig.* for me to condescend to lick a fourth form."

"It is not *infra dig.* for you to sneer at and bully a fourth form," replied Freeman, "always provided he be a little fellow, that cannot stand up for himself."

"Then you will have it, will you, young man," said Hamilton, leisurely taking off his coat.

"Please don't fight, Frank," said Walter; "he is the head bigger than you and in regular training; you are sure to be licked; and all for me!"

"For you indeed! what conceit! No, I'm the champion of the lower school. Hurrah! for liberty and equality!"

So saying, and throwing his coat to Walter, Freeman entered the lists, supported by cheers from the younger boys, who now looked on him as the representative of their order.

Four times was Freeman brought to the ground, bruised and bleeding, by the superior skill and strength of his antagonist; but at the fifth round he stretched his tall tyrant at his feet with a bloody nose, a black eye, and an utter incapacity to continue the fight. He was borne off by his mortified high-school supporters, while the conqueror was cheered and led to his room half blinded with bruises, to be carefully attended by the distressed and affectionate Walter.

"How can you ever show in the school this afternoon?" asked Walter. "I had better go for Mr. Wright (the surgeon of the school) and get a report to take up."

"It won't do, Wally," answered the wounded hero. "I'll not show the white feather now. There, bandage this thumb, and bring my hair over the cut. Is all

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the blood washed off? for I can see nothing. It's lucky this is repetition afternoon, and I'm pretty well up for it. There I shall do; lend me your arm, for I'm a bit shaky yet; but that's passion, Wally; and it's worse to bear than thumps, I can tell you."

"And it's sinful too, Frank," answered Walter sorrowfully. "We have both been very bad to-day; we ought to pray God to forgive us, and we must try to forgive Cameron and that brute Hamilton."

"Well, I'll speak the truth; I can hardly do that," said Frank. "As to Hamilton, he's a great bully, and no mistake, but I can forgive him; for you see, when I dared him to it, he was bound to fight for his order; and besides, I returned him as good as he gave, so we are straight. But for Cameron, I know when I go up he will set on to sneer and aggravate me, and set my blood up again; and it's no use saying that I could hold out my hand and say 'My good fellow, I freely forgive you!' When we're fairly out of his clutches I may think better on it; and if we had the means and the chance, I don't care if we were off this very night, for we shall have bitter lives till Midsummer."

"I have only one sovereign left," answered Walter, "for the dresses cost so much. Here, Frank, do you take care of it, for fear I should spend it. Then I have my half-crowns to come in every week, and except that I must buy a new Swiss Robinson, I don't mean to spend any part of them. We shall have money enough, Frank."

But Frank knew more about money than his friend, and he shook his head, as they went forward to the school-room.

Hamilton, more unscrupulous and more independent than Freeman, sent a note to plead a bad headache, and did not appear; and the boys seemed much surprised at the entrance of Frank, who bore the unmistakable marks of his deeds of arms. When he

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went up with his class, Cameron surveyed him with a sardonic grin, and indulged the class with a sarcastic lecture on the advantages of wisdom, and the beauty of the regulation of the passions, so strikingly illustrated in that bright example of learning and meekness now before him, which it was unnecessary for him to point out directly. Then perceiving he could not provoke Freeman again into rebellion, he said, "I will trouble you, Freeman, to take these papers to Dr. Markham."

Freeman, fully aware of the intent of this invidious distinction, bit his lip, but obediently fulfilled the command.

The doctor could not overlook his appearance. "What is the matter with your face, Freeman?" said he.

"If you please, sir, I've had a fight," said Freeman, respectfully.

"Very bad, sir," said the doctor; "very disgraceful —a violation of the laws of your school—of your country—of your God."

"I was not the aggressor, sir," said the boy, in a low tone.

"Well, go away; tell Mr. Cameron I wish you to do no more work to-day; you must go to your room," ordered the doctor, an order which Freeman gladly repeated, and Cameron received with vexation, though he was compelled to agree to it.

And the doctor observed to one of his head boys who was near him, "This accounts for Hamilton's headache. He is less honest than Freeman."

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CHAPTER II.

The penalty of wasted hours—Money and Opportunity—The packing-up—Off by the Train—The Jolly Sailor at Liverpool —Captain Moody—The confiscated Watch—A friendly Landlady—On board the good ship *Amelia*.

THE dismal, trying hours of lost and wasted time wore away. There was less tyranny in the play-ground after the battle; but the two plotting boys could not work; they fell even under the displeasure of the doctor for their carelessness and negligence; and he thought it his duty to write to the harsh uncle of Freeman to say that he feared the boy was in no way advanced during the half-year; and that this utter want of progress was entirely to be attributed to his own idleness.

The consequence of this report was seen in a letter which the boy received from his uncle; short, bitter, and cruel. He was ordered to take leave of school when it broke up,—to take his place to Liverpool,—to proceed to a certain office named, which was on the quay, where a situation of the lowest kind had been procured for him, and where he would probably have to use his strong limbs for some time as a porter, since he had not chosen to use his head to fit him for any better place, for no more money should be wasted on his education. A cheque for five pounds on a Liverpool bank was inclosed to pay for his first quarter's lodging; Dr. Markham would pay his fare to Liverpool, and his uncle concluded by the affectionate declaration that he desired never to see his face again.

This letter decided Freeman to persevere in his plan; it was, indeed, rather pleasant than otherwise, since it supplied him with a small sum of money

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towards his project, and he now seriously demanded of Walter whether he was quite determined to share the rough fate of one who was really driven to adopt so desperate an expedient.

"Why surely, Freeman, you never thought of going without me," said Walter, in great trepidation.

"My dear old fellow," answered Frank, "I should be wretched without you; but just consider, you have a home to go to, with people who care for you; you are not, like me, a poor, penniless outcast."

"I would not stay a day at Merton school after you left it for the world," said the boy. "If you won't take me, I will run away all the same, and hire myself to be a cabin-boy, or something of that sort; and then I know that I shall die without you to help me."

"I know that well enough," answered Freeman; "so cheer up, we'll not part, man; we'll scramble on together. And you see what a bit of luck it is that my uncle himself has given me a lift by freeing me to Liverpool, just where I wanted to go; and where we shall have our troubles to get you smuggled cleverly."

Two days after arrived the anxiously-expected despatch from India; a letter for Dr. Markham, and one for Walter himself, inclosing a bill of exchange for thirty pounds—a large sum for a boy so young; but Mr. Thornville was rich and generous. He wrote tenderly, saying how much he longed to see his dear boy; but he trusted that he was happy at school, and still happier in his holidays with his good friends in Portman-square.

Walter, with his usual impulsive feeling, burst into tears when he read the kind letter of his beloved father. "He will forgive me, Freeman," said he; "I know he will forgive me when he sees me, and learns how cruelly I have been used. And he will be so much obliged to you, dear Frank, for taking care of me. Then, I dare say he will let us choose what we would like to be. What do you think you would like? Not a porter,

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certainly; but, do you know, I am afraid we are neither of us fit for anything clever; we have been idle fellows this last half."

"There's no mistake there, Wally," answered his friend, "and I believe in my heart we shirked our tasks half to spite Cameron. We shouldn't have done that—it was dastardly; and we got no good by it. But we'll think of the future now; let me consider; I have always had a great fancy for the sea, and I shall now look round and see how I should like it; but then, there will be the vexation of parting from you; for you will be rich, and can afford to lead an easy life."

"No, no, I'll be what you are, Frank," replied Walter; "I never liked any books so well as voyages and adventures; and I will never settle to an easy life till I have been all round the world, and peeped into all the queer corners that no one else has seen. How I wish we were off; there is only one week left now to make all our arrangements; and I am dreadfully afraid that if I do not appear in Portman-square on the day I am due, they will make a fuss and send after me, and perhaps get hold of me. What must we do, Frank?"

"I could easily make up a story to deceive them," said Frank, after a pause; "but you know, Walter, we could not expect to be lucky if we started off with a deliberate lie. As soon as we learn the hour we are to be packed off, we must decide on some plan."

Their difficulties were much smoothed, however, by this letter, which Walter received the next morning from Mrs. Horner.

"DEAR WALTER.—Mr. Horner goes to Hamburg on business to-day, and John and Edgar accompany him. The rest of the children have been laid up in the hooping-cough, so I must carry them off to Brighton in a day or two. But I have arranged all pleasantly for you. Come direct to Portman-square, where I

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have left Mrs. Brooke, the housekeeper, strict orders to make you comfortable till it is safe for you to join us. Ask for everything you want, and I hope we shall see you at Brighton very soon.

"Yours very truly,

"AMELIA HORNER."

"What an escape for you!" said Freeman, "and luckily Cameron knows nothing about it; for he was too busy with the examinations this morning to look after the letters. I see now we shall get you off cleverly. I was a whole week at Liverpool two years ago, and I know the docks, and the queer, dirty shops, where the Jews will buy our useless clothes and cheat us soundly, and then sell us other things and cheat us more. Never mind; we want their help. Then I know the bank, where we can get our bills turned into cash; for we must not put them into the hands of the captain we sail with as they are; he might smell a rat to see two young vagabonds like us with a bill like yours for such a round sum, and the names would give him a clue to find us out. Now, into that large new portmanteau of yours we will put everything we mean to take for the voyage, and into this crazy old trunk of mine all we can spare, and mean to part with, and turn into cash."

"Capital!" said Walter, in great excitement, as he began to pack; "we must put in our sailors' dresses, and shirts, and handkerchiefs, and most of our books. Here is my new Swiss Robinson, that Cameron forced me to buy; and we must take paper, and pens, and ink, and pencils, and my pocket-telescope."

"And put in that work-bag, Wally," said Frank. "Old Margery, the housemaid, the only body that ever cared for me, packed it among my clothes, and I can mend rents, and sew on buttons tidily enough."

"Then, about our bats and balls, Freeman," asked Walter. "We must leave them here for the young

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lads," answered he; "they have the school brand on them, and though we bought them with our own money, we could not offer them for sale without the risk of falling into trouble. What have you got in that leather case?"

"It is a christening gift," said the boy—"a gold knife, fork, and spoon; I don't think I ought to part with them."

"Of course not: in with them," said Freeman; "we may be glad of them if we get into one of those scurvy little ships where there may be short accommodations. Now, what next? All the shoes and boots we must have; I cannot afford to buy more when we get to Calcutta; railway-rug? certainly useless in India, but may serve us for a mattress, if we cannot get a hammock; for I can tell you, Wally, our thirty-five pounds will not go far in getting us comforts; indeed, I fear they will hardly give us bread and water for it on the long voyage, if we don't make it up with working."

"Well, I'm willing enough to work at anything but figures or football," sighed out Walter. "What do you think we could do?"

"I hardly know what there is to do in a ship," answered Frank; "but I have my doubts whether there is anything that we shall be up to. Never mind; where there is a will, there is a way, you know. There, there, put no more into the portmanteau; we must leave room to stow some prog at Liverpool, for you'll hardly stomach salt junk and mouldy biscuit, old fellow. Now throw all the rest into the discarded trunk; and a pretty skirmish I shall have with the roguish old Jew that buys them."

"Do you know him, then?" asked Walter.

"Not I," answered Frank; "but he must be a Jew, and a roguish Jew too, who would buy good clothes from two run-away school-boys, which he will soon make out we are, and take advantage of the discovery."

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"But will he give us up to the police, do you think?" asked the alarmed boy.

"Do you think he will be such a fool?" replied Frank. "That would proclaim his own knavish dealings. No; he will hook us like two gudgeons, and make us his victims; but we cannot help that."

It was on a cheerful, bright morning of June, that some cab-loads of noisy boys left Merton school for the nearest railway station; each boy supplied with the sum of money necessary for his journey, and then left to make his way as he could. Amongst the band, though many might be merrier, none were more hopeful and anxious to be off than Freeman and his young friend. Great was the excitement; every one rushing to the booking-office for his ticket, thinking only of himself, forgetting every friend, and uninterested in the destination of any one but himself.

Then the trains began to arrive one after another: a last look at the correctness of the ticket, and a batch of boys took their places and departed with cheers. North, west, east, and south; all rushing in and rushing off again with fresh supplies, till all the shouting, happy expectants, with the pleasant vision of home before them, were carried off, except Freeman and Walter. The Liverpool train at length started, and the boys sprang into a third-class carriage, among rough mechanics, ragged women, and squalling children; there were no cheers for the conscious truants, who shrunk back ashamed of their position, and were whirled off for ever from Merton school, where they had been so unhappy; doubtless, in a great measure, from their own faults.

With what strange, mingled feelings the two rash boys stepped out upon the crowded platform, and knew that they had reached Liverpool, which they had so long talked and thought of. They felt a certain relief and independence; but this was somewhat checked, especially in Walter, by timidity, and the embarrassment of such a new position.

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"What shall we do, Freeman?" whispered he, clinging to his companion. "Some of these people may know us. See how that policeman is watching us."

"No wonder," replied Freeman, sharply, "when you are looking so sneaking and cowardly. I suppose he takes us for a couple of young pickpockets. Look round you like an honest man, can't you? We're safe enough at this strange place, rely on it. Here, catch up one end of the portmanteau, while I shoulder the trunk—mind the rug—now push along."

When they reached the stand, Freeman hailed a cab, and, depositing in it the luggage and his alarmed companion, he told the man to drive to the "Jolly Sailor," near the quay, and then stepped into the cab.

"We shall do now, my boy," said he. "This 'Jolly Sailor' is a low, noisy, sailor-haunted place; but it is just the right thing for us; my uncle went there because it was cheap—that's a recommendation to us—and it is near the ships, and out of the way of townspeople. And now, Wally, I do insist on it, that you put on a bold face, or we shall never get on. You are my younger brother, you know; I am Francis Thompson and you are Walter Thompson, because of the "*T*" on your portmanteau. We will keep our Christian names; for if we changed them, the right name might blurt out by accident and betray us."

They were set down at the "Jolly Sailor," which was by no means an inviting hotel, and there they entered a coffee-room, surrounded by boxes, into one of which Freeman led the way, and called out in a tone of authority, much to the admiration of Walter, for "Tea and chops for two." This refreshment cheered them greatly, and when Freeman had secured a bed-room, and deposited there in safety the precious trunks, the friends sat down to smoke a cigar, an accomplishment they had acquired, under many difficulties, at Merton school.

Very early in the morning, Walter was looking

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through the mud-covered windows of their room in astonishment and disgust. Could this indeed be the wealthy Liverpool—the city of merchant-princes! Tall black houses shut out all prospect beyond the narrow street, along which loaded trucks and waggons were slowly winding in an incessant, dull, filthy stream. He opened the window, but shut it again immediately to escape the intolerable effluvia of mingled bad odours, amongst which gas and tar predominated.

"How can people live in this place?" asked he of his friend. "I am quite sure that everything we eat will taste of tar and gas. This must be a very bad part of the town."

'Not quite Portman-square, my boy," answered Frank, laughing; "but we would have it, you know; and it is a capital place for our purpose. Did you see what lots of sailor-fellows were about last night. I heard one of them drop something about the *Amelia* sailing to-day for Calcutta. That is our chance, I should say, the sooner we start the safer we shall be."

"But we can never get ready, Frank," said Walter, "we have a great deal to do; the money to get at the bank, and then to buy our stores, and——"

"Never you mind, we'll manage—come along, we'll have some breakfast, and then be off to look after the *Amelia*."

They put on their sailors' jackets, breakfasted, and then set out to the docks; but amidst the forest of masts, and the confusion and crushing, they might have sought in vain for the *Amelia*, if a sailor lad, with a load on his back, had not run against Walter and thrown him down. He stopped to ask if the boy was any worse, lifted him up, and said, "Now, whereaway, young chap?" and tempted by his good-natured countenance, Freeman asked him where the *Amelia* was lying.

"I'm off to her now," answered the lad; "if you steer after me you cannot miss her But what will

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you be wanting with the *Amelia?*" added he, with the inquisitive freedom of his class.

"If we can agree on terms," said Freeman, "we would like to take our passage out to India."

"What do lads like you want to go out to Indy for?" continued the sailor. "They don't need no such chaps thereaway; such small boats better keep in port. Moreover, I reckon we've little passenger-room; but yon's our captain, you can hear what he says, and it 's a chance you'll be over well pleased with his speech."

The boys followed him up to a dark, morose-looking man, who in a harsh and vehement tone was directing the men who were engaged in loading the vessel.

"Now, lads," said he impatiently, "what are you wanting to trouble me about at this untoward time?"

"Please, Frank," whispered Walter, "don't ask him. I'm afraid of him."

But Frank knew the peril of delay, and said boldly, "We want to go out to Calcutta, sir, where our father lives; we must go as soon as possible; we have not much money, and we wish to know what is the lowest sum you can take for our passage."

The man looked on them with a scornful laugh, and said, "We're not likely to come to terms, I fancy. How much cash have you, I'd like to know?"

Will you take us to Calcutta for twenty pounds?" asked Frank.

Where do you think I get my beef and biscuit, you fools?" shouted the man. "How do you fancy I can feed two hungry lads like you, and find you in ship-room to Calcutta. for ten pounds a piece? Make off with you. We're full, and we can't be pestered with idle vagrants without a penny in their pockets."

"Then will you be civil enough to tell us," replied Freeman, "if you know of any other ship likely to sail for Calcutta soon."

"None that will take in such useless ballast," said he.

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"Oh, Frank, what will become of us?" cried Walter, in distress. "We must get to papa: he is rich; he will pay you, sir, what more you require: pray take us to him, and we can work for you."

"Much good you would do," answered he, looking with contempt on the delicate boy. "Here's your brother, to be sure, is a stout fellow, and might lend a hand. But how can I tell whether you have really a father in Calcutta or not, and whether he will be 'sponsible for your debts. I like my money paid down."

"Please, sir," said Walter eagerly, "I have a watch that papa said cost him twenty-five guineas."

"Did he say so? Then I should say he's been famously taken in. Let's look at your twenty-five pounder," said the captain.

To Freeman's great vexation, Walter produced his handsome watch and chain, and the crafty skipper saw at once that the watch was valuable; but he said, "It's not worth a quarter of what you say; but, howsomever, hand it over—I'll keep it safe till my money's made up—and bring me your twenty pounds and your kit to-night at seven. As you both seem willing to do little odd jobs when we're put to for hands, I'll not object to give you your berths and your grub. Now, make yourselves scarce—I've plenty to do without such idle talk."

The boys, somewhat cast down, reluctantly left the watch in the hands of the covetous man, and returned to the tavern to make ready for their expedition into the town for the purpose of getting the bills cashed. This business Freeman undertook to transact, as his age and confidence of manner fitted him better for a manager of money matters than the shy boy. Dressed in their best clothes, they proceeded to the bank pointed out to them by the landlady, whose sympathy was awakened by the polite appeal made to her by the two well-dressed and well-mannered boys, who seemed

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so young to be thrown on the world without protection. There was no difficulty made in cashing a bill drawn by a firm so well known as that of Thornville and Co., and so obviously meant for the expenses of the son who indorsed it; and the relieved boys proceeded to a marine store-shop, to be regularly taken in, as Frank predicted; and there disposed of the trunk and its contents for two sovereigns, not a quarter of their worth; but then—no questions were asked.

They next consulted the friendly landlady on the subject of the stores it would be advisable to purchase, telling her they had engaged to go in the *Amelia*.

"The *Amelia!*" exclaimed the good woman; "poor boys! Ay, ay! you're like to take your own provision, or it's little you'll get. But, now, honeys, you'd better think again about it. Moody's a hard, screwing fellow; he always has trouble enough to raise a crew to carry his old crazy ship out, and he has no accommodation for passengers; not he, indeed. He will be set to give you either bed or board. What possessed you, lads, to think on sailing with the *Amelia?*"

"Because it was the first ship to sail, Mrs. Smith,' replied Freeman; "and we were anxious to be in Calcutta. Besides, our money would have been spent if we had been forced to stay here long."

"You've fallen into bad hands, my bonny bairns,' said Mrs. Smith. "You'd better wait a few days; yon grand steamer's to leave port on Friday."

"But Captain Moody has cribbed my watch, ma'am," said Walter, "and papa would be sorry if I should lose it, for he paid twenty-five guineas for it."

"Twenty-five guineas for a watch for a lad like you!" exclaimed Mrs. Smith. "Whose bairns will you be? and what for are ye strolling about here by yourselves? I'm feared ye'll be after some scampish tricks; and I tell you, lads, I don't half like it."

"But you must not tell of us, dear Mrs. Smith," said Freeman; "we have run away, because we have

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been very cruelly used; but we really want to go straight to Calcutta, to Walter's father, who will be glad to receive us, and will thank any one who is kind to us. We had not so much money as Captain Moody required, and that was the reason Walter had to give up his watch; and it is quite out of the question to think that we could have paid our passage in a steamer."

"Poor fellows! and how much has he had the conscience to charge you?" inquired the landlady.

"We are to give him twenty pounds, besides my watch; and papa is to pay the rest when we get to Calcutta," said Walter.

"He'll never face your papa, rogue that he is!" said the irritated woman. "He'll strip you of all you have, and then God knows . . . But if I see him I'll warn him he need never show his face in Liverpool docks again, if he does not act fairly by you."

"Is he a pirate, do you think, ma'am?" said Walter, fearfully.

"Nay, nay, my honey," answered she, laughing. "Pirates wouldn't pick up a deal hereabouts; but he's just a hard-hearted grasping rascal, he is! and you'll have to keep stout hearts, and both eyes open, and, after all, he'll fleece you."

Moody did not call any more at the "Jolly Sailor;" probably he had an idea that he was no favourite with the landlady. So, all she could do for the poor boys she felt so much compassion for, was to advise and help them. She procured them a stout deal box with a lock, in which she packed a ham ready cooked, a cheese, a large bag of fine biscuit, a good supply of tea and sugar, and a bottle of brandy in case of illness. She got them to buy some wax candles, and match boxes, for she suspected Moody would not allow them lights, and she counselled them especially to conceal from him that they had any money left, for they might yet find a use for it. To these stores the boys added the ex

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travagance of a small box of cigars; then the locker, as the good woman called it, was closed. She set before them a substantial dinner before they left her, and, taking an affectionate leave of them, she sent a porter with their luggage to the quay, where the boys found a boat, and were carried from the shore on their rash and imprudent expedition.

CHAPTER III.

First impressions—A peep below deck—Honest Tom Heartley—Life in the cabin—First day at mess—Sanatory labours—Walter's ideal sailor—A long yarn—Tom in the union-house—The sailor-boy—Tom's notions of geography.

When they stepped upon the filthy, crowded deck of the *Amelia*, they were distracted at the confusion around them, and were glad to sit down upon their two boxes, to save them from being heaved down into the hold amongst the multifarious packages that still encumbered the deck, and which the men were lowering in a rough and careless manner. The boys heard the loud harsh voice of Moody, shouting, cursing, and abusing the sailors; at last his eyes fell on his young passengers, and he called out, "Now, then, loungers, where's your cash? hand it over, and then be off, out of our way, unless you mean to do a stroke of work."

But it was not Freeman's plan that they should begin to work for the despot, till they could no longer avoid it. He gave twenty pounds into the hands of the captain, who looked suspiciously at the boys, and seemed surprised to see the gold.

"Now, Captain Moody," said Freeman, "you will please to spare one of your people to show us our berths, that we may remove our luggage out of your way.

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He hesitated, and grumbled a little, then went to the young man who had introduced the boys to him, gave him some brief direction, and resumed his noisy, rough bawling.

"This way, young fellows," called Tom, as they heard Moody name him, leading them to an open hatchway, and pointing out a crazy, broken, companion-ladder. "Hand me over that heavy locker, and give each of you a hand to the leather thing. Now, then, steady, my boys, it's rough sailing down here, mind your footing."

In no very pleasant mood of mind the two lads at last managed their awkward descent, and followed Tom through piles of boxes, casks, and bales, in darkness and alarm, till he opened a door, and showed them into a little den about eight feet square, and ten feet high, dimly lighted by a single sky-light of dust-covered glass, closely grated over, which enabled them to take a survey of their future apartment. It was wholly without furniture, except a small broken table, lying on the side, and one rude hammock, which Tom told them he had that morning put up for himself. Round this cabin were lockers, which formed a low bench, on which they seated themselves; but everything was so filthy, and the air was so close and impure, that the lads felt quite sick.

"What a miserable hole!" exclaimed Walter. "Oh, Frank, we can never live here; and where are we to sleep, if you please, sir?"

"Take it coolly, young gent," said Tom; "you just stretch yourself out on that there locker, and thank God as how you have a quiet berth. Bless you! I rig up this here hammock o' purpose to get away from yon ruffian crew as he's pick up someways, as isn't fit for any decent Christian to live among. You can go to them, if you fancy such company; ay, ay, they'd give you hammocks, and tow you along with them till you were as bad as themselves; or if you show pluck and

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hold your own, they're up to worry you to death, and *he* never ask what's come on you. But come to anchor quietly here, my lads, till I can join you; and mind you never come in sight to-night, for he's rabid first day, and bite all as come nigh him."

And so saying, Tom left the youths, who were stunned, and deeply repentant at their hasty bargain.

"But it's no use fretting and moping, Wally," said Frank, "we cannot get our money back, so we must make the best of it now. It's lucky this Tom seems a friendly fellow; we had better take his advice and keep clear of the blustering captain."

"It's so close, and hot, and dirty in this black-hole, Frank," sighed out Walter. "And how can we sleep on this rough bench without mattresses. Do you think we could not contrive a hammock with the railway rug?"

"We must consult the oracle, Tom," answered Frank. "Leave the door open for a little air; and perhaps, with Tom's help, we may contrive to break the glass of the skylight. We have great reason to thank him for separating us from the vicious sailors; and after all this dirty little sanctum is our own."

Still, with all their prudent and valorous resolutions, the poor boys sat silent and disconsolate, thinking with fear on the dreary prospect before them, till after two hours, Tom entered quietly, bearing a tin jug of water, a cup filled with rum, and a few coarse biscuits.

"It is all I could raise for us," said he; "but as I find I am rated cook as well as mate,—a queer crew we have,—I'll see we have a better mess to-morrow."

The boys were not hungry enough to eat any of the black, coarse biscuit; and rejected with disgust the grog which Tom prepared in a second cup. They contented themselves with water; and they saw, with some disappointment and vexation, that Tom drank the greatest part of the rum.

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"We'll stow away the rest in the locker, you'll be glad on it to-morrow, anyways," said he.

"We shall never be glad to take rum;" said Walter. "It is drinking spirits that makes men wicked, like those sailors you told us of."

"Halloo, masters, is that your figure-head?" said Tom. "Why you are uncommon like Old Jack in your ways, as I sail with my first voyage. Poor Old Jack! he were a reg'lar good 'un; and talk like a parson. Ay, he were altogether of a different sort to yon fellows; he set me again grog at first, and I were willing to give it up, but then ye see, we got cocoa in lieu, and good stuff it were. We was well victualled in the *Temerary;* and years after, I held off grog all right. But now, you see, I've taken up again with my old captain, he as learnt me the trick to sip a drop of grog, it seems to come nat'ral again, 'specially when I see we're like to have short commons and long cursings."

"But now you are our comrade, Tom," said Frank, "we must be friends and live alike. We have tea and sugar, and if we can get hot water to-morrow, we can drink tea. Then we have biscuits and cheese; we shall do very well."

"Yes, do live with us, without grog," said Walter. "I should be afraid to be in the room with a man who drank spirits. We can be very comfortable, if the room was cleaner and more airy. Can you read, Mr. Mate."

"My name's Tom Heartley, master," answered he, "short Tom, and no Mr., if you please. As to reading, I could once have done a little smooth sailing; but them long words was all reefs and sand-banks, and I always stood off, and gave them plenty of sea-room. Old Jack were a rare hand with his book; he'd spin you long yarns of book-learning, without ever stopping to belay the halyards. He were a jolly salt, and it were a fair-weather watch when we two came together"

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"Well, Tom," said Walter, "when you are off duty, you must come here; we have some capital books; and I will read the Swiss Robinson to you."

"When Moody sets in to his grog at night," answered Tom, "he are fast and quiet for a good bit, and I'll be here to get a yarn from your books, and thank you, masters. And now it's dusk, we must turn in till my watch comes on. Here, young 'un you'll have my hammock to-night; I'll stretch on the lockers, and to-morrow I'll get some old sails, and sling you up a couple of neat hammocks in no time."

Walter was compelled to accept the kind offer of Tom, and after the two boys had knelt down to their prayers, somewhat to the astonishment and confusion of their companion, they lay down, requiring no covering in the summer weather and in that heated cabin, and slept in defiance of dirt, bad smells, and cockroaches.

By Tom's interference, though he laughed heartily at their dainty fashions, they obtained a bucket of sea-water for washing next morning; and he then brought them a tin of coffee with some biscuit. The coffee was weak and without milk; but the boys were hungry and made their breakfast on a mess they would have shrunk from a week before, even at school.

"You'll have to mess at dinner with yon vagabonds," said Tom. "The captain chooses to victual all alone; and that's no great loss, he's not first-rate as a mess-mate. But you'll have to answer to your names this morning, so step on deck, but look sharp, my lads, and move off as soon as you can, for a small whistle calls up the breeze, and then, won't he blow a gale."

The boys followed Tom to the still disorderly deck, where they found Moody overlooking his sailors, of whom there were but eight, besides Tom, who were tarring and arranging ropes, the unpleasant sight and smell of which were far from agreeable. There was nothing to induce them to remain in this scene of

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confusion; the oaths of the fierce skipper, the clattering of boxes and casks, the grinding of rusty wheels, and the overpowering smell, made Walter look pale and tremulous, and he started when Moody came up and said roughly,—

"Now, you lazy dogs, what are you wanting? Are you ready to work? If not, heave off; we want no dead hands here."

"Must we offer to help him?" whispered Walter.

"Time enough for that," replied Freeman. "If we give the fellow an inch he'll take an ell. We'll not work unless we're forced to it. We have paid amply for what we are likely to get; now let us take a look round this chaos, and then go back to our dungeon."

It was a strange new scene to the school-boys, and they would gladly have stood quietly to contemplate it; but they were unwilling to rouse the wrath of the irritable skipper. They observed that their friend Tom held a sort of subordinate rank, and was directing the rest of the men in stowing away the still unarranged cargo, in coiling or rolling up scattered ropes and sails, in covering those which were up with some offensive tar or grease, or in hoisting and loosening the sails,—many other mysterious occupations were going on, which the boys longed to understand, but did not venture to disturb even Tom. Yet on the whole this confused, busy scene was interesting to them, though they were disgusted with the coarse and offensive language of the men, and their total disregard of that respect and obedience which the young lads had always believed were enforced in nautical discipline; for every labour they performed seemed to be forced from them by threats, oaths, and even blows. As Tom passed near them, in the discharge of his duty, he muttered, in a low tone, "Wear round, lads, and make off. Breakers a-head!" And, though the language was somewhat unintelligible, they understood it as a warning to retreat, and reluctantly returned to

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their unwholesome cabin, where they employed themselves in unpacking their books, which they arranged in one of the lockers, determining to keep them out of the sight of Moody, whose covetousness seemed to be insatiable.

"Here is the book we bought on the science of navigation," said Freeman. "I might as well try to work a bit at the problems; but as to picking up any practical knowledge of it, there seems but small chance from that uncivil dog, Moody, or his surly, villanous crew. Tom, to be sure, seems of another sort; he is most likely mate, and I wish he had been captain. What are you going to read?"

"Cæsar," replied Walter, "I like very much to read of those glorious wars. There never was such a general. And I have left out my new copy of the Swiss Robinson, to read to Tom when he comes. But I do not feel as if I could enjoy reading anything in this miserable, stifling place. It is as bad as that black-hole in Calcutta we used to hear about."

"I've a great mind, Wally, to shy my brush at that sky-light," said Freeman, "and break out the glass. The man could not kill us, even if he found it out, and I don't think he would be at the trouble and expense of repairing the damage."

"We could pay him for it, that would be the best," said Walter, "and tell him why we broke it. But we had better consult Tom about it."

Tom looked in upon them soon after, and said, "You can take a look out on deck after his dinner, when he's moored fast to his bottle; but he's dangerous just now, when he's put about."

Then Freeman told him their discomfort in the dust and dirt, and closeness of the little cabin. Tom laughed, and replied,—

"Why, sure you never look to find like as one as your mother's parlour; or chanceways you've sighted them grand saloons as they have in the steamers; and

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this here falls short for sartain. Well, then, there's no denying as how he arn't the man as some captains is, that keeps their ship as clean and taut as the Lord Mayor's Mansion-house. He's a near hand; he even down grudges buckets and swabs, and then you would see yourself he's short-handed. But I'll tell you, lads, I'll hand you down a bucket of water, and you must learn to swab and scrub your own deck; and I'll manage to take out yon square of glass cleverly, so as how he mayn't miss it, under the grating; but you'll bear in mind that if we have a brisk gale and a heavy sea, you may get more water than air."

"We'll risk that, my good fellow," said Freeman, "for it is not possible to endure this foul air; and if you really can get us a bucket of water and a brush we'll try our hands at housemaid's work. It will be quite a jolly lark, Wally."

"But what can we do with that heap of litter in the corner?" said the boy, despondingly.

"Oh, that's a lot of old sails and ropes," replied Tom. "We must rig up the hammocks out of them. Here, lads, heave them out, and let me shape them for you." The sails were soon spread over the floor, and shaped, as Tom expressed it, and when ropes were knotted to the corners, they were slung to the beams by hooks of rope, so that they could be taken down in the day-time. Blankets were fortunately not required in such an atmosphere, and pillows they made by rolling up some of their clothes. Walter selected some pieces of the sail-cloth for housemaid's rubbers, and then Tom cast the waste fragments into the hold.

He was then compelled to leave them to go to the galley, where he was teaching the youngest of the crew the duties of cook, that he might be more at liberty to attend to his own employment as mate, or second officer. At noon he returned to conduct the boys to the disorderly, noisy mess of the sailors, whom they had seen on deck. Reluctantly they sat down

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on a crazy bench to a rough table, on which was placed a large piece of coarse boiled beef; battered pewter platters, broken knives and forks, with tin cups for the liquor, were placed round, and each man hacked as much as he chose from the beef with his own knife and then passed the dish round. This, with hard biscuit and a certain supply of grog, was the dinner. The rum was rejected by Frank and Walter, who were willingly allowed to carry off an equal portion of water, while the rest shared their grog.

Very glad were the disgusted boys to escape from the coarseness and blasphemy of the sailors, and take refuge in their despised cabin, where Tom soon after brought to them the means of beginning their cleansing, and then left them to attend to his own duties. It may easily be supposed that their task was not an easy one, and was accomplished with all the awkwardness and imperfection of first efforts; besides, they were obliged to be careful of the water, for they did not yet know how to procure it themselves, and thus the purification was by no means complete; but the air felt cooler, and less pestilential, and the spirits of the prisoners revived after their successful exploit.

In the evening, Tom came down to tell them that Moody was safely fixed down in his cabin for a regular drinking bout, and therefore they might as well keep on deck as long as it was light; an announcement very agreeable to the boys, who gladly ascended to enjoy the cool air, and the sight of the wondrous, untiring, open sea, which they had now reached. A brisk breeze and a clear sky promised fair for the voyage; and now there seemed less confusion among the reckless sailors, who were lounging idly about, or resting on coils of ropes chewing their tobacco, singing, disputing, or pouring forth such profane language and absolute blasphemy, that the boys removed from them as far as the confined decks would allow, and seated themselves beside Tom, who was at the helm, and who

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seemed himself ashamed of the ship and disgusted with the crew.

"I shan't have a watch to-night," he said to them; "anchor yourselves here, my lads, and give yon scamps a wide berth; they're not fit comrades for the like of you."

"But surely all sailors are not such rude, wicked men," said Walter. "I always fancied they were all fine, noble, generous fellows like long Tom Coffin in the 'Pilot.'"

"I don't know nothing of that there ship," answered Tom, "and I never hear of that same Tom Coffin; but there's all sorts, master, and there's as good fellows on sea as on land, I reckon. But you see, he's a deep hand, and he's cruised about, and picked up all the out-and-out scum of the dockyards. They're no better than *navvies*, and craft of that build; and I can't say what possessed me to surrender and be rated on his ship's books again, when I know him of old. But he hailed me fair, and give out as how I were to be mate, and have little work and good pay; and I looked to better myself. A neat berth for a mate is yon hole."

"How came you first to take a fancy to be a sailor?" asked Walter. "Now tell me, wasn't it from reading Marryat's delightful books; or perhaps 'Tom Cringle's Log?' Both Frank and I were wild to go to sea after we had read them."

"I can't say I ever fell in with any of them folks," replied Tom; "and for taking a fancy, it were little as were left to my fancy. Bless you, master, it's not oft as lads like what I were, has it put to them whether they'd like land or sea."

"Do tell us, then, Tom," said Freeman, "how you happened to become a sailor? Who are your parents?"

"It's a long yarn, youngsters," answered he; "but if ye like, I'll spin it out to fill up time till it's full dark. Parents, I have none. My father were a builder as was killed by a fall from the roof of a house, and

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my poor mother were left with me, a bit of a babe, and my sister three year older, and she worked and toiled on till she fell bad herself, and then they towed us all off to the union-house, where she died before I were wise enough to know her.

"The first thing I can call to mind is being abused and birched because I were such a slow-sailing craft at learning to read. Mary, my sister, was a sharp lass, and she tutored me what she could, and it were all owing to she, as how I could manage at last to make out a chapter in my Bible. It were an ugly voyage that same to learning; many's the reefs and rocks I've neared since that; but I never met with any shore harder to coast. Then they tried me with writing; but I made no sail to reckon, thereaway: the master was a crabbed, blustering fellow, and I turned dogged. Then my fingers were a deal over thick and clumsy to handle such a slender spar as a pen—flog as he liked.

"When that wouldn't answer, they set me to help the tailor; but my needle were always dropping out of my clumsy paws. The shoemaker had no better success; I were a dunce, he said. I took kindliest to carpenter's work; and many an odd job I did for old Will Chipps, as worked at the union, and he would have taken me 'prentice; but you see I was a growing lad, and a rare feeder, and in course he asked for a fee, and the board they were not willing to come down; and they brought it in as how I were to be 'prenticed to a chimley-sweeper. That I couldn't stand no-ways.

"Now you see, a lady visitor at Sunday-school, she take a fancy to my sister—a taut, well-going lass she were—and she carry her off from the union to be her under-nurse. Poor Mary; she write to me, as she were well used, and liked her place; and at last she write as she were in France; and then no more letters come. I were a great dunce and a fool then, masters;

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and I thinks, thinks I, if I can run away and get on board a ship, I must needs be carried to France, and no mistake."

"It's rather like our story, Tom," said Walter; "but I wish you would not have said you were a great fool."

"I were a fool, I tell you, master," continued he. "I run off, without chart or compass, and made my way to Liverpool, begging or starving, for I had not a shot in the locker; and there I stood on the quay watching the ships, as you were doing, my lads, and that made my heart warm to you; but I hadn't that sense in me to ask where they were bound. Just then, who should come up but this same Moody—he were a smarter like chap then—it are six years since; and says he, 'D'ye want a job, lad? here lug me these traps to yon boat.'

"I were big and strong, though I reckon I were not more than twelve year old then; so I bore off with my freight right ahead, and was at the boat before him. He put his hand into his pocket and fumbled a good bit, and after he had pulled out something, he looked hard at it, and considered, and put it back into his pocket. Then he give me a good look over from stem to stern, and says he, 'You don't seem over freighted with cash, I should say.' 'I haven't a penny, and I'm half-hungered, sir,' says I.

"Then he went on quite cunning-like: 'May be you are here looking after a bit of pocket-picking, my sharp lad?'

"'Not I, then; I'd let you know,' says I, turning quite vicious; 'there's not a man living as could say Tom Heartley were a thief.'

"'Ho! ho!' says he, 'then if you are one of that sort, what would you say to a spell at reg'lar work; meat and lodging, and to be learnt to be a top blue jacket? Now, what would you say if I were to rate you on my ship's books?

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"'Why, then, sir, I say God bless you,' says I to him; and thankful I says it, and I tell him then, and I keep my word, 'Master, I'll do my best to be a good servant.'

"'Then turn in,' says he;—and he shows me the boat. 'I calculate you'll have no trouble about your luggage.'

"Then I feel as how my fortin were made, and I were into the boat in a whiff, and as we were rowed off to the ship, I says to him, 'I always wish to be a sailor; cause why, you see, I have a sister in France, and it will be a grand thing for me to be carried over the sea to Mary.'

"'Ay! ay!' says he, with a queer sort of laugh, and somehow I didn't like him to laugh; but it were not for me to think aught again him. When we came on board, you may guess, masters, how stupified I were among such lots of strange things, and I stood like a post till one of the sailors shook me into my senses, and set me to work to heave away the stowage. I were willing enough, but I were terrible awkward at first, and came in for plenty of hard words and hard blows too. But I cared little about that, I'd always been used to knocking about; and after a while, one of the old hands, Jack Bright (second mate), he takes my side, and he tells me, just quiet-like, what I were to do, and then I manage all capital.

"It were a tidy craft, were the *Timerary;* you see it were a ship as had been taken from the French, and they give queerish names to their ships. We were well laden, and had a crew of a dozen sharp, clever fellows, and our captain, he were not such a surly brute then; it will be a matter of six years since, and times seems changed with him. Sure enough, I had hardish work; for, you see, every hand on board was my master, and it was always a word and a blow, and often the blow came first. But what then? I had plenty to eat, and were learning all the time, for Jack he show me

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how to swab and slush, and run aloft to the mast-head; and, after all, it were not half so bad to bear as Union slavery."

"But Tom," said Walter, "was the ship really bound to France?"

"Bless your heart, master, not a bit on't," continued he; "but I knew no more of forrin countries in them days than this here bulkhead. Says Jack to me one day, says he, 'What put it into thy head, lad, to come to sea?' So I tell him, as how I had always been wanting to be a sailor, that I might go to see my sister Mary.

"'Thy sister Mary, lad!' says he; 'what, is she one of them mermaid creaters, as thou looked to find her out at sea?'

"'No,' says I, 'she's in France, and our carpenter puts it into my head as how if I went to sea, I'd be sure to get to her.'

"Then all the sailors they set up a great laugh at me, and Jack says, 'My lad, thou must be a reg'ler green hand, thou must. Dost think now, lad, as how thou's bound to France?'

"'Why, where are we going?' asked I, in a great fright; 'I thought all ships went to France.'

"'Why,' says he, 'thou soft land-lubber, dostn't thou know the *Timerary* is bound to Boston, in 'Merryka?'

"'Oh, dear! what must I do?' I cries out; 'but Jack, will you ask the captain to be so good as put me out at France, for you see I don't want to go to 'Merryka.'

"Then they all roared with laughing again, for you see, I were as good as a Punch show to them. But when I made out that I were not going to Mary, I set on to cry, like a great fool as I were; and Jack, as good a heart as ever lived, says to me, 'I'd never be a babby like that, man. If thou'st never been at school, there's many another as arn't had that

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chance; and, may be, knows as little how forrin places is set out round this world; but thou'st a sharp chap, and I'll see if I can't learn thee a bit.'

"With that he takes a flat board, and chalks out on it lines of all shapes; and he starts, and what with talking and what with chalking, he gets it driven into my dull head as how these marks showed how we sailed, and how that were Liverpool, and that were France; and then I thought I might have shaken hands with Mary, them places seemed so nigh to each other. But no! he got me round to know how every straw-breadth on this chart of his reckoned a hundred miles, and that we were sailing away hundreds and thousands of miles from that very France as I wanted to go to. That made me cry harder than ever, and almost set him vexed with me; but he were a real kind-hearted fellow, and he says to me, 'What for don't you write to this sister of yours, and tell her what you're about, and there will be more sense in that than fretting like a woman body.'

"But I told him I never could learn to write. 'Didst thou ever try, man?' asked he. 'Any lad may learn as tries.' Then I lets him see my big, clumsy fingers, fitter for handling a rope than a pen; and I tells him as how it were sure to drop out of my grasp, and make a foul blot as couldn't be swabbed up. Jack laughed at me for a dunce; 'but,' says he, 'as soon as we can overhaul a sheet of paper and pen and ink, I'll try if I can't spin thee out a sort of letter to send to thy sister; but stationers' shops isn't thick on the Atlantic; we'll have to wait a bit, my lad.' And it were many a day before I were able to send off my letter to my poor Mary.

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CHAPTER IV.

Tom Heartley's Voyages — Alarming Suspicions — Moody's Tyranny—The Question of Supplies—The *Amelia* a Slaver—A Secret Confederacy—Mike Ryan, the new ally—The Coast of Africa—Where shall they turn—The Favourable Opportunity.

"We landed at Boston, and when we had unladen the ship, Jack didn't forget to write my letter, just in my own words, as good as if I had done it myself. And I tell her how I are off, and how I hope to make a good sailor when I were a bit older; and would be sure to come to her when I were my own master, and she must write me a letter at the 'Jolly Sailor,' Liverpool. But to this day they never owned there as how a letter had ever comed for me.

"After we returned to England, I engaged again with Moody, and we made a voyage to Indy and Cheeny; but there Jack and he fell out. We had, it seems, been carrying opium out to Cheeny, and that were again the law; and Jack were very stiff about our duty to God and man. And so he left us at Canton; for, he said, he'd have no more dealings with a man as would break the laws, and one as made no bones of cheating poor ignorant creatures into the bargain; for he showed as how Moody were charging them twice as much as were just for his poison. I did grieve to part with Jack, for he were a father to me; and if I be a thought better than yon bad, swearing rogues, I owe it all to Jack. I would fain have followed him, but he showed me as how it were my duty to work out my engagement; but he left me his Bible, that I might read it for his sake, and keep out of evil.

"I couldn't bear the *Timerary* after Jack left; it were not like the same ship; and, when we landed at

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Liverpool, and I were paid my wage, I left Moody. After that I made three voyages in the *North Star*. I sailed for Cheeny again; then I went to Buenos Ayres, and my last voyage in her were to Bombay All that time I've never made out any more about Mary, and my letters as I got writ came back to Liverpool, cause as how she couldn't be found, and it's my fear she's dead.

"Well, the *North Star* wanted repairs, and we were paid off, and I were looking out for a berth, when I fell in with my old captain, and engaged with him before I set eyes on his ship, or I'd been sorry to be rated on the books of such an old, crazy, foul hulk. I neither like captain nor crew now I'm fast; and I'm not easy about our freight."

"Is it dangerous?" asked Walter in alarm.

"Dangerous, master!" repeated he, "why, then, I say, I'm feared as this ship isn't no reg'lar trader; and now it's out. I never see such bales of queer merchandise; not for Indy, that I'll swear; but just for some underhand dealings among them as he can take in easy. I question much whether we ever see Calcutta."

"You don't say so, Tom!" exclaimed Freeman, in great excitement. "What a grievous disappointment that would be to us, and especially to poor Walter. And what in the world would become of us in such a case; for his rapacity has nearly left us destitute."

Walter was absolutely stunned by this terrible insinuation, and appeared to be in such deep distress, that Tom wished to draw back from the assertion he had made, and now said, that he had been vexed, and after all it might be that he was mistaken, and all was right. And Freeman consoled Walter, and encouraged him to be cheerful, saying, "Never you go and turn spooney, Wally; if the fellow has told us a lie, we can surely fight our way, anyhow. We shall be free, and we have heads and hands to work; and who knows?

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we may have some grand adventures. Didn't we always want that?"

But, however lightly they tried to talk of their position, they went down to their dull cabin with sad hearts, and could not sleep for the gloomy apprehensions that haunted them. And day after day their situation became more painful and humiliating. The sullen and malignant Moody had insisted on the boys sharing the work of the crew; he employed them in menial occupations; their clothes and their hands were defiled with the contents of the tar and grease buckets. He had even struck the weaker boy when his bolder companion was not in sight; and Walter had endured the insult uncomplainingly, for he dreaded that Freeman should know of it, lest he should resent it, and still further exasperate the mean tyrant. Tom laboured hard to shield the boys from the despotism of Moody, over whom his nautical skill gave him a good deal of influence; but, when one of his fits of ferocious rage came on him, all efforts to govern him were useless. He would burst into the little cabin to which the boys had fled, seize their books or drawings, and fling them into the sea, and use such violent abuse of their idleness, even adding blows, that their existence became intolerable; and they were prevented from enjoying the few pleasures the voyage might have afforded them, in observations on the distant islands and the marvels of the southern sky and ocean.

Tom had suggested to them the probability of the ship touching at the Cape for supplies; indeed, the scarcity of food and water was already beginning to be felt; but to his great surprise he found that this was not the intention of Moody.

"I cannot make out what is in the man's head," said Tom to his young friends. "I'm all in the dark about his curious tacking ways. But I'll tell you what, boys, I'm sure on it, now—the *Amelia* is never bound for Indy; and I'm feared it's bound for a bad coast, and

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on bad business; but, bully as he is, he shall hear my mind about it. If he thinks he's to fill this foul, crazy craft with them greasy nigger slaves, it's no place for Christians to be shut up in, and be poisoned with bad air and bad smells, and heartbroken with seeing them poor creaters flogged, and hungered, and half-murdered, I'll just tell him plain, that I mean to inform again him for a slaver if he doesn't land me at Port Natal. And then, I'd say, he'll land you too, for he'll want all the room he can get to stow his unlawful freight in, a cruel dog."

"But I hope he will return us part of our passage-money," said Freeman, "or how shall we get forward; what in the world could we do, on a strange coast, without money?"

"I'd like to see that man as could haul money out Moody's pocket when he'd once stowed it there," replied Tom. "Nay, my lad, you might as likely try to heave a best bower anchor with a woman's sewing thread; and you cannot help yourselves noways. God forgive me, if I wrong him, but he's hung out such dark looks this last few days, that I'd not wonder if he were to shoot us, sooner than let us into his mind, if he thought we'd be like to inform; and that's what I'm set on doing, please God."

The following day, as they approached the latitude of Port Natal, Tom thought it advisable to take some steps towards an explanation; he therefore addressed Moody, saying, "We're short of water, and noways well off for provisions, sir; where do you mean to take in supplies?"

"What's that to you, fellow?" answered the surly captain. "Mind your own business; and please to keep your hands moving and your tongue still. It's easy to put the idle hands on short allowance, if we run low."

"But, let me just say one word if you please, sir," continued Tom. "It's out of all reason to think our

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provision will hold out to Calcutta. Are we really bound there, or where else?"

"I've no call to tell my servants all my plans," replied Moody. Then after a pause, he added: "But if you have a mind to lend a hand to a good paying bit of business, I don't mind letting you into it. I had a good offer at Liverpool, and struck a bargain for a lot of cheap rubbish, which I mean to exchange on this coast with the fools that come down the country to trade; and I expect to take in a good freight of black cattle, that I can have a capital profit on. It's a safe job."

"And where do you mean to stow them, sir?" said Tom.

"I'll find means for that when I have discharged my cargo of rubbish," answered he. "Then we can stow them in the hold—we must pack close, for we have a longish voyage to make; and it's our interest to keep them alive and kicking, any how, till they're off our hands. We'll provision on the coast where we ship our live stock, and then keep clear of all ports till we land at Brazil, where I look for a heavy purse for my freight."

"It's illegal, Captain Moody, and it's unchristian too; that's my opinion," said Tom, boldly.

"And who," cried the man, bursting out into a volley of oaths, "who asked your opinion? You're a fool for not keeping your mouth shut. What are you, and all my slinking crew, but a gang of slaves?—bought and paid slaves; fellows bound to do what I choose to order. I'll soon let you know that; and the first that sets up his opinion against mine, shall feel who's master. He shall feel the rope's end, and wear the irons, and then he'll give his opinion, who's master and who's slave."

"Ay, ay, Captain Moody," answered Tom, "I'm not the lad to mutiny, or deny that you have a clear right to our services; because why, you've paid for

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them. But we none of us were such fools as to sell our lives and our souls to you."

"Souls! souls! you impudent rascal," cried the irritated man; "what do you mean by your souls? Can you tell me that? I see through it all; it's those lazy, vagabond lads, that I was such a fool as to bring out, that have crammed your head with this mutinous nonsense; but see if I don't flog it out of you all; and for them, I'll take care and put them ashore somewhere or another before long. And you'd better look close to your work, sir, and mark me—I'll keep my eye on you, depend on it."

"Then, sir, I suppose you will not land me at Port Natal?" asked Tom.

"Certainly not," answered Moody. "We shall not come within a hundred miles of Natal. Out of my sight, dog!"

When Tom and his young friends met in their little cabin at night, and could venture to speak, he told them all that had passed; the deception that had been practised on them, and the dangerous position the vile projects of Moody had placed them in.

"What will become of us, then?" asked Walter.

"Why then, my boy, I must say I cannot get a clear sight of his chart," answered Tom; "unless he has it laid down to leave you at one of them infernal Portuguese slave-markets on the coast, where they would make no bones at looking over a bit of traffic, white slaves for black, with them dealers as comes down the country, and would sell their own flesh and blood for a keg of rum or a flaunting shawl, or above all, for white slaves, as they hate like poison. But anyhow, you'd never weather a voyage with a ship crammed with black flesh, as far as America, where the rogue expects to find a market for his stowage. As for me, you see, lads, I know he'd give his ears to keep me on the books, for he hasn't another hand worth his rations; but when he finds I am set

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on holding out again his unchristian trading, and be like to peach when we come to port, he'd be safe to cast me adrift too."

"And he has our money, Tom," said Walter, weeping.

"Ay, and he'll take care to keep it," answered he. "It had been better for you, lads, if he'd had it to look forward to, for may be he'd then have kept a bit better behaviour. There's no more as can be done now; but we must hold fast to one another, and keep a sharp look-out for a chance among these rogues. They're all alike, but Mike—that's he as how I learned to cook—and he's not half a bad fellow; he's young, you see, and not up to their roguery. I'll harpoon him, if I can, and wind him up here."

So when Tom went to his pupil in the galley, he opened his attack by saying, "Now, where would you say the *Amelia* was bound, Mike?"

"Arrah, then, Mr. Heartley," said the man, looking up slily; "is it there you are? And you'd be wanting to come over me, and it's yourself is knowing it altogether. Isn't that a mighty nate thrick of you, to be worming out my explainings, and you keeping your own mouth close? Spake out like a man, then, and say your say."

"Well then, Mike, I will speak," said Tom; "for I don't think you're the fellow to blab. You may read off my log freely, man. I say the *Amelia* is a slaver, and no mistake; and, as sure as we're here, she'll soon have a precious cargo of black flesh and blood, and there's not a hole in the dirty craft that will not be poisoned with them."

"Och! worra, mate!" answered Mike, "and sure it's the right thrack you're sailing on now, and I'm the boy to spake out my mind on that same. Sure, it's a small taste of that thrade I've had before; and, by the powers, I'd not be liking to thry it again. But, botheration, we're not strong enough to bate the spalpeen bouldly, mate; and the boys are every soul vowed

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to him; and it's myself knows it would not be my word would incense them again him, at all, at all."

"We've no chance to go again him, Mike," said Tom; "but we're not bound to side with him again the laws. And I were thinking it were as well, when we land for our freight, for us to strike and make a run for it. We cannot be worse off under any colours than we are now under this villain."

"It's a mighty sharp creatur as he is," answered Mike, "and that's thrue for us, Mr. Mate, and won't he be bad to circumvent, musha! But it's not minding we'd be of his irons, once we have our feet on dhry land; and Mike Ryan's the boy as will join your watch; for sorra a bit will I demane myself to consort with his black cattle. Av' they were Christians, indade, that would be another thing."

"Well then, Mike, we'll reckon up four hands, anyhow," said Tom, "We shall have them two poor young lads in the cabin, as the Turk has cheated out of their passage-money to Indy. Then we must carry off what freight we can as is our own justly. Let me alone to be on the look-out, and be smart when I sing out the time to you."

It was some satisfaction to the boys to learn, that if they were abandoned on the shore, and compelled to take flight they knew not where, they should not, at any rate, be alone; and they secretly made all ready for the favourable opportunity. But, now, Tom saw with great vexation, that Moody plainly suspected some plan was going on in the little cabin, and was prepared to defeat it. He watched the conspirators incessantly; or when he was drinking in his cabin, Tom was sure some spy was watching them in his place. The vigilance was never suspended. Then the vile man became more brutal than ever; he struck and kicked the boys when they fell in his way; and he poured out such torrents of vindictive abuse on Tom that the lad saw he evidently wished to provoke that

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retaliation which should give him a pretext for confining the offender or bringing him up for punishment.

Mike alone seemed to elude all suspicion; he escaped many a hard word and hard blow that fell on the rest of the crew; and the cheerful song of the Irish lad, continually kept up as he worked in the galley, disarmed all apprehensions of his mutiny. But the sly lad had his eyes open to all that was passing. "Arrah, Mr. Mate," whispered he to Tom as they stood in the galley one day; "sure it's dangerous yon brute is; didn't I mark Sykes and he caballing agin you; and isn't he the boy as wouldn't mind giving you a friendly pitch overboard; av' you were niver mindin the thrick, arrah!"

They were now entering the Mozambique Channel; and still Moody guarded a gloomy silence, nor did any one openly dare to allude to their destination. All at once he seemed to have made up his mind to look over the mutinous expressions and opinions of his mate, whose services he could not well dispense with in this sea of currents, shoals, and coral isles; and Tom was once more called on to carry the vessel to the main coast; while the two boys, who had been compelled to come on deck to escape the intolerable closeness of the cabin, had to share the general labour and endure the coarse revilings of Moody.

But they were, however, somewhat cheered by the sight of the distant, hazy line which announced land. Gradually they bore up nearer to the low, bare coast, which was unrelieved by any mountainous or forest scenery, and, viewed at the distance of a few miles, appeared such a cheerless desert, that the hopes of the intended fugitives again fell.

"Do you suppose, Tom," asked Freeman, at the first opportunity of consultation, "that the hard-hearted wretch proposes to put us ashore in yon barren wilderness? I only wish, if that's his plan, that he may land us himself; and once get my feet on a fair

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field, big as he is, see if I don't give the scamp a good licking. If he were to leave us at a settlement, though that would be a dirty, knavish trick, we might have a chance of begging or working our way, for he has nearly cleaned out our pockets; but we should die of starvation yonder. Where are we, Tom? What is yon land?"

"He hasn't let me see a chart for many a day," answered Tom; "and, to speak the truth, I don't feel fit for the helm hereaway. I've made three voyages round the Cape before, but we bore more east, and never took our course through this sea, which I reckon will be the Mozambique Channel, and yon coast are Africa, where the rogue has no call to land honestly. But it's all as I say, Master Freeman, he's after a black business; and you make yourself sure, he's not the man to land at a Christian station, not he, where he might chance to have his freight overhauled. He's cunning enough to deal with none but them as is easy to cheat, and that's them black-faced and black-hearted dealers. Bless you, them black heathens as fetches down the slaves are real born children of the devil, it's my opinion; they'd sell their own father and mother with all the joy in life, for such paltry rubbish as this Moody has gathered up to tempt them with. Then they're always open to a bargain to take white slaves for their blacks; and that seems fair enough, for they know well enough how white men treats black, and they like to pay off that score; and it's my fancy Moody means to ship you and me off in barter, and then, God help us."

"If it be so, Tom," replied Freeman, "the natives will not be so much to blame as this villain. What can you expect from such ignorant savages, when they see this infamous traffic carried on by men who profess to be Christians. God help us, indeed, who are to be the victims of such wickedness. But, Wally, be a man—what are you snivelling about? We won't give

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in. I say, Tom, set your wits to work, man. Can you think of no way for us to get off from this fellow?"

"All I can look to now," replied Tom gloomily, "is the chance ashore. We've not a shaving to hang by here, shut up in the ship; and yon's a deadly, foul port. But what's in the wind now? What does he mean by turning up the hands at this time, when he's always over his bottle?"

Orders were issued to let down the anchors. The coast was now not more than two miles from them, and it was desirable to lay at anchor during the night; but to Tom's great astonishment, the captain's boat was ordered to be lowered, and two men named to row him to shore.

"I shall remain ashore till morning," said he to his mate; "and now, take notice: it's likely enough some of yon infernal black negroes will come out with their canoes, and try to board the ship and trade with the men; but mind what you are about—I'll have no trade go on but my own, and not one of the dogs must even step on board. I know them, thieves as they are, and my plan is to meet them ashore, and nowhere else; so get out a watch-boat, with another man along with yourself, and take care, as you value a whole skin, to drive every canoe off. In my cabin you will see a gun, which you can take, and if you find the black dogs more than you can manage, fire a signal-shot, and we'll row back to help you. Now, you've heard my orders and it's at your peril you neglect them. Here, Sykes, down with that bale, and look smart, man."

A huge bale of cotton goods was transferred to the boat, which then moved off with Moody, the spy Sykes, and another man, and Tom stood in deep thought, watching the boat make to the shore. At length he turned to Mike, and said, "Mike, I shall take you for my consort in the watch; be ready, for in half an hour it will be dark."

"I say, mate," said one of the men, "I see no need

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of a watch on deck; sure a watch below is enough. We'll lower you the boat with a will, but you'll spare us the watch."

"That's your affair," answered Tom; "I'll mind my orders, and I'll not meddle with you; that's all I can say."

The men laughed and winked at each other, and Tom saw with great satisfaction that they intended to shirk their duty and keep no night-watch.

CHAPTER V.

The Watch-boat—The Embarkation—Mike's Morality—Maps and Charts—Whither to steer—Land, ho!—The Plague of Mosquitoes—A natural Tea-kettle—A Foraging Expedition.

"Now is our time, lads," said Tom, as he entered the little cabin, "now or never. Mike insists on engaging with us; and if we leave him, he'll be shot by that bully. Where we are to make to is more than I can tell; but free we must be of this foul ship with its foul cargo. Have you got together your traps? Then, up with them, lads, and after me; I'll set you a place to stop in till I sing out the time to you; then Mike and I will bring round the boat aft, and take you in snug, for it's coming on a right down pitch darkness."

The boys, in great agitation, followed Tom with their boxes, and as quietly as possible they entered the captain's cabin; but there was no need of caution, for the five sailors left on board, always ready for their hammocks, were already asleep. Tom took the gun, and a very liberal supply of powder and shot, and directed the boys how to lower the boxes and descend themselves when summoned; he then left them, and

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joined Mike in the boat, which they rowed several times round the vessel, till they judged all was safe for their purpose; then, bearing up aft the ship, they made a signal to the boys, who immediately lowered their own boxes, and one left with them by Tom, and, with a good deal of trepidation, descended the rope themselves.

"Now lie down at the bottom of the boat," said Tom, "and neither speak nor move till I hail you." And with this command they readily complied, and lay for ten minutes while the rowers continued to work round the ship. At length Tom said, "Now's our time, Mike; ship your oars, and let her drift a bit; and we'll be considering what course we'd best take. You can sit up now, lads, and when needs, you'll be ready to lend a hand."

"How dreadfully dark it is, Tom," said Walter, in a low tone. "Arn't you afraid that we may be driven upon the coast where that terrible man is?"

"Not a bit of fear of that, my boy," answered he; "you see we're in a current, drifting north just now; and we're as well on that course as any other, as long as we keep clear of reefs. Can you make out anything, my lads?"

"I see a distant speck of light at our left hand," said Freeman."

"Ay, ay, at the west; all right," replied Tom; "that's on the main; that's Moody's lantern yonder at his holding; it's our lighthouse, my lads, we must keep our eyes there, and give that light a wide berth; for look you, men, it's the roughest rock we can run again."

"Och! botheration, my jewels," said Mike; "it's little now we need be fearing that spalpeen hisself; seeing he has his work cut out for him in stowing his black freight nately in the ould hulk; and it's hardly like he'd be weighing his anchor just for no purpose but for bearing down on this same crazy ould boat

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and two or three hands, as he'd be mighty glad to see the back on."

"I was thinking myself, Mike," said Freeman, "that he would hardly take the trouble to chase us, when he really wanted our room."

"There's sinse in it, my boy, and sure you're right," answered Mike. "But look here, my darlins; maybe it's jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire that we're doing, if none of us can tell what port to make to."

"You know, Tom," said Walter, "that I have been reading for many evenings about this coast, and the islands in the Mozambique Channel; because Frank thought we might perhaps be shipwrecked, or left on shore here. I know there are many islands about; and above all, you know, Tom, there is the very large island Madagascar; couldn't we land there, if we be not far off?"

"If our boat hold together," answered he, "and our strength hold out; but I think, Master Walter, we read as how them Madagascar people were not over fond of strange visitors."

"Oh, yes, I recollect," answered Walter; "and so, please Tom, we'd better choose some small uninhabited island."

"We must take the first safe landing we can reach," answered Tom, "to rest and look about us; but it would never do for us to be left for good, perched on a bare rock. We were as well to stick to the foul old ship."

"Well then, I spake the truth," said Mike; "and I'm bould to say that same *Amalia* was a natish craft, barrin her foul-mouthed skipper, and fouler decks, and little enough to ate in the bargain. Musha! Mr. Mate, Mike Ryan, an Irish lad, was sure to be making a blunder; but you're altogether English, and how was it you blundered along with me, and were engaging with that rapparee? And now we've maed the biggest blunder of all. See now how aisy it was

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to choose us our arms in his cabin, and batten down the hatchways, and made the *Amalia* our own, to be sailing where we liked, and she rigged out taut, and her decks scrubbed; wouldn't she be a trim craft? We'd been four to them five rascals, and guns in our hands; sorra a morsel of chance for the rogues, barrin they were submitting; and then, may be, it wouldn't be suddent we'd let them loose. Och, worra! we've missed makin' our fortins, boys."

"It would have been mutiny," said Tom.

"And dishonesty," added Walter.

"And base cowardice," said Freeman, indignantly.

"Och, botheration!" exclaimed Mike; "what a hullaballoo to be making about a thrifle, and the man a rale rogue, and that's thrue. Och! maybe then, will we be honest to carry off his boat, and his gun? It's thinking I am we'd been honester as we'd just swum away without a rag and nothing else. Musha! it's a fine point! and it's not in me to clare it up. It's an illigant conscience you larned gentlefolks is holding."

"Indeed, Mike," replied Freeman, laughing, "I fear we cannot come off with clean hands. But you see, ours was really a case of life or death. And then the man has got twenty pounds from us, besides Walter's valuable watch and chain; altogether I consider he has had fifty pounds from us."

"Worra! then we'll make a clane breast, master," replied the Irish lad; "and it's owing you the balance he is, and no mistake; and our wages, and I wish we may get that same, my jewels."

The anxious fugitives continued to labour at the oars, towards the north, till the morning light showed them the coast dimly to be discovered, but no island visible towards which they might direct their course. At length, Tom said, "We must pull east, Mike; it will never do to keep so close to the mainland, where we couldn't safely land. We are two or three hundred miles from Madagascar; it's a chance our craft hold

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out to reach a reg'lar port thereaway. And, God help us, if we fall into the hands of any of them islanders, as is always savages, or thereabouts. If we could only whistle up a breeze to let us rest our arms."

"We ought to be having the south monsoon a bit longer," said Mike, "but it's given to shift about a thrifle at this season."

"I feel very hungry," sighed Walter.

"Bless us!" cried Tom, flinging down his oars, "we forgot to provision the boat."

"Och, and by the powers! didn't I do that same without orders?" said Mike. "Didn't it come into my blundering head? and didn't I say to myself,—'Sure, Mike, isn't it the cook's duty to look after the prog, and niver wait for orders?' See here, my darlins, this illigant bag of Moody's own white biscuits, and this nate keg of wather, which would have been rum, and it's thrue for it, only the spalpeen had carried off the kay of the spirit-room."

"God be thanked," said Freeman, "that temptation is spared. But we owe our lives to you, Mike."

"And he has brought even two tin cups to drink from," said Walter, in admiration. "Oh! how I wish we had not eat all our ham; but we have the greatest part of the cheese, and of the tea and sugar, and all the brandy."

"That's the right thing, my pretty boy," said Mike. "And wouldn't a sup be good for us all, just at this time?"

"No, no," said Tom, "we've seen enough of that game. We'll have no drinking when we want our heads cool and our hands strong. Let that stand off till we come to port. Now for our breakfast, and then for hard work again."

By the time they had eaten their biscuit and cheese, and each drunk a cup of water, a gentle south-west breeze had got up, and they hoisted the sail, which

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they had taken care to bring, and profiting by the favourable wind, flew lightly and pleasantly over the bright waters of the channel, the sail affording them some shelter from the intolerable heat of the sun; while the boys were charmed to watch, without any dread of the ferocious Moody, the curious flying-fish making its flights or leaps of tremendous length, while the monstrous albatross sailed round ready to pounce upon the heedless victim.

"Quare craturs they are, mavourneen," said Mike. "South say captins, they call them big birds, for it's the sowls of them as dies hereaway they are; but bedad, Captain Moody's black sowl will be takin another shape. Won't it be in a shark he'll be, swimming to get a grip of a poor sailor boy, and not a bird flying about agraable like?"

The time did not seem long in such a novel scene, though many hours elapsed before the coast-line was no longer visible; then they had more cheese and biscuit for dinner, and continued their voyage with light hearts, cheered by the certainty of freedom, with a good supply of food, and favourable breezes.

"We can hold out a week on our provision," said Tom; "and by that time, if the wind holds, we may hope to get into safe harbour. But, Mike, we'll have to set a watch, at nights, for there's lots of reefs and sand-banks I know, as is laid down in the chart of this channel. I wish I had my hand on that paper. There'll hardly be any charts, I should say, Walter, boy, in that curous book as you're throng with, that tells about all forrin parts."

"I have no charts, Tom; but here is my book of maps, and I fancy this is near about the point where we may be now," said Walter.

"I can't say, my boy," answered Tom. "Them poor doll-house picters is little use, as far as I can see; it's a reg'lar take in. See here, that's marked the Cape, and this here Madagascar; and I can lay my

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finger from that to this. Now, I ask, how can that help a seaman to navigate his ship?"

Freeman laughed, as he said, "These maps would certainly never serve the purpose of your charts, Tom; but they have their uses to show us how the land lies, or such inexperienced voyagers as Walter and I might never have found out that Madagascar lay near us."

"Can't I see it all, Mr. Freeman?" said Mike; "and isn't it fair there should be land charts as well as water charts, anyhow? But, sure, our mate here, isn't he the boy as would be wanting the say to be the masther of the world altogether?"

"Well, Mike," answered Walter, "it was so in the beginning, and it may be so again, if God wills it. And, you see, in this map of the globe, there is far more sea than land even now."

"It's a pair of spectacles I'd be wanting," replied Mike, "to see all your sharp eyes can see; but it's taking you at your word, I'll be doing, mavourneen, and little doubts you'll be right. Sure, never a one of me knows betther."

It was hopeless to begin a course of school-boy geography with such practical voyagers as Tom and Mike; so the atlas was restored to the box, and the boys submitted to learn instead of to teach. They took their turn when needful at the oars, looked out for shoals and reefs, and shared the night-watch.

A second day passed without sight of land; but the wind continued favourable, and the labour light. The third morning came on a calm, succeeded by an east wind, which compelled them to lower the sail, and resume the labour at the oars; and it was not till they were worn out with fatigue that they hailed the sight of land before them, and soon made out that it was a small island.

"Do let us land there, please, Tom," said Walter; "my arms ache till I can work no longer; and though I'm sure our hands had become very hard with playing

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fives, you see even Freeman has got all the skin rubbed off his; and look at mine!"

"Why, as to landing, my lad," answered Tom, "that's as it may be; 'cause, you see, we may fall into a trap. Some of them there islanders are awkward customers, and we may have the whole convoy on us, before we can pipe to quarters. We'll pull round, as close as we can, safely, and take a survey."

They examined the coast, which was rocky, barren, and apparently desert; and the whole island seemed to be guarded by rugged reefs, which forbade approach; and it was only by great circumspection, and the skill of the two clever sailors, that the boat was carried safely through a narrow opening in the rocky boundary, after which they succeeded in mooring it beneath a spreading mangrove on the narrow strand of this unpromising island. "Well, we may, to be sure, rest our arms, and stretch out our legs here," said Tom; "but there seems little good in wasting time, and coming in from the fine cool air of the open sea to this hot, sandy, bare coast, among these here spiteful beasts," flinging a mosquito from his face. "One might just as lief keep watch at once, as turn in, and be eat up alive by such venomous blood-suckers."

"I've read," said Walter, "that these insects always swarm most about the mangroves on the coast. I should think that if we were above on the rocks, we should be free from their attacks."

"There's a deal of sense in books, like enough," said Tom, "for them as can read them off smart. But them as is lubberly about that business, has only just common sense, and that tells them as how they wanted a rope's end to them, if they turned in to their hammocks, and left their craft, on a strange coast, without a watch."

"That's true enough, Tom," said Freeman; "but Walter's hint about the mangroves is not bad. We needn't lose sight of the boat; but that's no reason we

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should encamp under the mangroves. There's a rocky nook yonder, without tree or shrub near, will be pleasanter; and see, my dear fellow, here is a rill of water trickling over the rock. We can turn out this foul stuff in the keg, and take in a supply of fresh water."

"I'll be takin' the liberty to taste first, masters," said Mike, "seeing them strange rivers are mighty oft given to bale out salt water when they're never axed for that same."

But, fortunately, Mike's precaution was unnecessary. The stream that flowed from the rocks was above the influence of the tide, and afforded that delicious refreshment, cool fresh water, so long denied to the voyagers.

"Sure, wouldn't a dhrop of brandy improve it altogether, I'm thinking my boys," said Mike.

Walter had opened the box to take out the cheese; he now hastily closed and locked it with a loud click, looking to Tom and Frank to support him.

"Don't be afraid, Wally," said Frank, laughing. "We'll not give out the brandy. It is our medicine store, Mike; and we have positively made up our minds never to touch it except in cases of great need; so, turn your mind away from such delusions, my friend. Now, I certainly would not object to a cup of tea, it would be very refreshing; but then, where's the tea-kettle! What have you got there, Tom?"

"A hat-ful of sea-birds' eggs," answered he; "so we must rig up a fire, and roast them, to save the cheese to-night. We may need all the prog we have."

They all had match-boxes; withered branches and driftwood were abundant; so a fire was soon kindled in a crevice of the rock to roast the eggs. Then Walter, who had been seeking shells, came up with one which was of the trumpet or Triton kind, which he declared would make a capital tea-kettle; indeed, the canal or spout which was nearly cylindrical, and

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the lip, which formed a sort of lid, seemed to fit it well for such a purpose.

"We will try to attach a handle to it afterwards," said he, "but now we must make a shift without, and boil the tea in it, as we used to do in the teapot, in the studies at Merton, Frank."

The shell was washed, a little tea put in, then it was filled with water at the spring, and suspended over the fire by a line; a few lumps of sugar were added, and the product was a beverage which the boys enjoyed, Tom approved, and Mike tolerated.

"And now, Mike," said Tom, "you and the young boy must turn in, and Mr. Freeman and I will take the first watch; for we must not lose our boat, and four hours' sleep is surely enough for strong hands like us."

The useful rug was spread over the soft sand, and formed a luxurious couch for the tired voyagers, who alternately watched and slept, till morning summoned them to resume their active duties.

"Oh, Frank," said Walter, as Frank came to rouse him, "I am so tired, I should like another short nap. Couldn't we remain here for a day; then we might climb the cliffs, and find plenty of eggs and young birds. I have seen lots of terns, and the stupid booby, and that red-pouched frigate pelican with its long wings; and I should so much like to visit their city on the rocks. I knew all the birds directly from the pictures I have."

"We must never lay by for a whole day," said Tom; "but I see no harm in foraging for an hour or two to provision the boat, and Master Walter here seems to have a sharp eye in making out all sorts of land and water creaters; and there's no doubt as there is a deal of good stowed up in them there books for them as can haul it out. He's a keen hand, he is, Master Freeman."

"Indeed, you are right, Tom," answered Frank,

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"Wally's good head has often helped me out of the scrapes at school, which were all owing to my blunders and idleness."

"And you helped me, Frank," answered Walter. "You worked those doleful sums, and you thrashed those big bullies that were so hard on me."

"Ay, ay," said Tom, "all right, a fair bargain,—head on one side and pluck on the other. You'll be two useful hands after you've served awhile; I'd like a crew of such-like. Now, Mike, my man, anchor down by the boat and keep watch, and you'll sing out if you see a strange sail, while we cruise about to look after supplies."

"Shove off, my boys," cried the good-natured lad. "Is it the boat you'd be fearin' for? Niver a fear need ye fear for; sorra a creatur livin' ye'll be like to find a top on yon bare cliffs at all, barrin them bastes of birds as hasn't no sense to get away."

CHAPTER VI.

The Bird Colony—Mike's Charity for the Savages—Canoes in sight—A Storm—The Hour of Danger—The Wreck of the Boat—The Coral Reefs—A Resting-place—A Bold Invader—An Attempt at Harpooning—The Landing.

THEY climbed the abrupt and dangerous cliffs that rose from the strand, only to find still higher rocks behind them, a terrace, or flat shelf, intervening, which was absolutely covered with the nests and the excrement of thousands of sea birds, the discordant cries of which nearly deafened the plundering invaders, who filled their pockets, handkerchiefs, and hats with eggs and young birds; though this pillage was not effected

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without some fierce and desperate conflicts with the bereaved and angry parents; and the robbers were glad to make their escape and scramble down the cliffs, as quickly as they were able, loaded with their booty, with a great sacrifice of skin from their hands, and eggs in their pockets.

"Hand over all the eggs and the birds to the cook that's nading them," said Mike; "and just you see, my jewels, what an illigant frying-pan myself has found" —producing a very large oyster-shell. "Now, I'll be troubling ye for the broken eggs out of yer pockets; and won't it be an hommerlet fit for the captain of a first-rate, as I'll show ye, barrin' the yerbs, which is not at hand, aisy."

A very fair omelette, which had, at least, the attraction of novelty, was cooked by Mike in the oyster-shell, and fully enjoyed by the hungry ramblers; then the rest of the eggs were roasted, as well as the young birds, which were spitted on twigs of mangrove and placed round the fire till sufficiently cooked. They were thus supplied with provision which would enable them to economize the valuable biscuit. The cooking was willingly undertaken by the two sailors, who had both officiated in the galley; and to the school-boys the occupation afforded great amusement, and reminded them of their past stolen feasts of questionable cookery, in study or dormitory.

"Were you not rather afraid, Mike," asked Walter, "when you were left alone to guard the boat?"

"Was it feared I was, Master Walter?" answered he. "Not a whit—not I; hadn't I this comrade?" showing the gun; "and didn't I say to myself, Mike, says I, my boy, an' a strange face looks right at ye, aback of a crag, you shoot him down nate and sharp, and niver you mind asking no questions at all."

"Surely, Mike," replied Walter in horror," you would not have been so wicked as to murder a fellow-creature, who might have been quite innocent of offence."

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"Innocent!—not a bit of that same!" answered Mike; "sure it's all alike them wild savages are. Fellow-creaturs! Not they! It's haythens they are, little better nor bastes anyhow; and niver a church, nor a chapel, let alone a quarterdeck rigged up for prayers, did they iver clap eyes on. Sure, it's shooting them down is good for them, wild bastes as they are! What say you, Mr. Freeman—are you rasonable?"

"I hope I am, Mike," replied Freeman, "and I don't like your plan of proceeding a bit. I think Walter is quite right. Why, man, we are invaders and robbers here; we had not need be murderers too."

"There's a shade of truth in that, master," said Tom; "but, you see, it's the custom like of the high sea to take possession of all strange lands, after the laws of the ship, and in the name of the queen; still, I'd hardly like to fire the first shot."

"Arrah, then, my boy," said Mike, "who'd be firing the next shot, av ye were kilt with the first? And what says the saying then?—Isn't it larning that says, 'First in wins;' what will your books be telling us about this same, Master Walter?"

"I will tell you, Mike," answered Walter, "what the best book in the world, God's own book, says, 'Do unto others as you would have them do to you.' Now, would you like to be shot, if, meaning no harm, you chanced to look over a rock in your own island upon some strangers who had landed there?"

"It stands to reason," said Tom, thoughtfully; "still, my boy, it's like enough as them as came to spy us, came for no good; and them as keeps a sharp watch keeps a safe watch. But as for that there gun, I have my doubts. Now, boy, what is it you've got a sight of?"

"Some little moving black dots," answered Walter. "Do you think, Tom, they can be ships? Perhaps there may be one on its way to India. Could we not make a signal?"

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"Just you wait for orders, young un," said Tom, hastily. "Ships! I say, likely, indeed, yon fleet should be all ships! Cast her off, Mike. As sure as you're born, yon's a fleet of canoes, full of them spiteful dogs as wouldn't mind killing us all, without asking questions, and, maybe, eating us into the bargain."

Walter laughed at this idea, and said, "Oh, no, Tom, the islanders of these seas are not cannibals; but I have read that they are jealous of strangers, and vindictive, and they use poisoned arrows, too. Which way should we row now, Tom?"

"North, to be sure," said he. "Now, all on board—sharp, my boys! No idlers! There we go!"

And once more the little boat advanced over the clear waves of the sea, so far in advance of the canoes, that the gallant little crew trusted they need not fear any pursuit, though it was still needful to use the greatest exertions in order to escape the observation of those savage islanders, to whom even their small possessions would offer temptation to plunder and murder.

As the canoes appeared to be rowing from some island at the south, the voyagers thought it prudent to run directly north; and even if their little boat should have been observed from the canoes, they made way so rapidly, that they soon distanced and lost sight of the alarming objects. Then they ventured to alter their course more to the east, where they still hoped to effect a permanent landing; but after a day of great fatigue, exhausted by the intolerable heat of the sun and the labour of rowing in a dead calm, they looked round in vain for any island where they might moor the boat and rest for the night; for they had no anchor, and when the sudden darkness shrouded the sky, they dreaded to use the oars, lest they should encounter unseen and fatal perils.

They lowered the useless sail, and while two slept soundly, the watchers endeavoured to lay to, as well

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as they were able; but though there was no wind, a current towards the north-east was perceptible. It was past midnight, when suddenly the wind rose, the waves swelled, and the slender boat was hurried along with incredible velocity, quite beyond the intervention of the alarmed voyagers, who all started up at the cry of danger. They shipped the oars, and then each clung to the benches or the gunwale, to escape being swept away by the wind or the waves. Tom threw his strong arm round the trembling Walter, whose feeble form could ill contend with the force of the gale, and tried to cheer him in that hour of peril.

"I am not afraid of death, Tom," sobbed the boy; "but I do fear to meet the anger of God; and we have all been very sinful. Frank and I, as well as you, left our duty; we had no forbearance or patience; we refused to submit to His will. Oh, Frank, we were like wicked Cain; we fled from the presence of God, and He has found us. Tom, I am praying for pardon and mercy. We must all pray now, for we cannot help ourselves, and He only can save us."

"It's all true, I know, my boy," said Tom, with a deep groan; "but you see, I mutinied long since, and God cast me adrift, and I cannot expect to be rated on the ship's books again."

"Those are very wicked words, Tom," said Walter. "God never casts any man adrift. Do you not remember that I read to you, that our Blessed Saviour forgave the thief on the cross, because he prayed to him? Do pray now, dear Tom; He will not refuse to hear you."

"I'll do my best, my boy, but I'm out of practice," said the man; and he began to mutter the Lord's Prayer, probably all he could remember of his early religious instruction. Frank was silent; but he had covered his face with his hands, and his faithful young friend felt assured his heart was with God. Mike alone seemed hardened; he attempted to whistle, then he called out, "Why, what will be the matter, boy; won't

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it be all written down as how we've to be handed over to punishment? and sure Mike Ryan's not the boy to be whimpering, and he desarving it intirely. Now, will it plase ye, young un, to be handing over that bottle in the locker? Is it giving the fishes in the say a trate of grog, you're maning?"

Frank boldly rebuked Mike for his irreverence and hardness of heart, and Walter said, "Do, dear Mike, be sorry for all the bad things you have done, and think of that judgment which we must all be called to, perhaps very soon—I will pray God to forgive you, poor man!"

Then Walter prayed aloud that God would have mercy on them all; and the simple petition of the gentle boy seemed to produce some impression on the reckless, scoffing young man; he was silent for some time, and the boys hoped, thoughtful and repentant.

But they now discovered, by the comfortless condition of their legs, for it was still too dark to see, that the boat was half filled with water, which they were obliged to commence baling out speedily. Fortunately a bucket was tied to one of the benches, and with this, and their hats, they set to work to overcome the danger; but the waves continually dashing over the boat, rendered the task interminable; and fatigue and hunger had almost reduced them to utter helplessness, when the morning light showed them a line of coast to the east, which renewed at once their hopes and their vigour. As the sun rose, the wind abated, the sea became calmer, and they were able to desist from their hard labour of baling. The heat soon dried their wet garments, and they began to think of refreshment; but they found the roasted birds, which were in a broken locker, were too much soddened by the salt water to be palatable; the biscuit, which had happily been placed in the only sound locker, had escaped, and the cooked eggs were protected by the shells.

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After they had eaten a hearty breakfast, they began through Walter's pocket-glass to examine the coast, now plainly visible. It appeared to be rocky, clothed with dark forests, and guarded by coral reefs; but no trace could be seen of the habitations of men. Tom and Mike decided that this was certainly the north-west coast of the island of Madagascar.

"We shall never be able to thread yon reefs, and make a landing," said Tom; "but we must pull as near as we can safely; and after all, the surf does not run high, and we may surely contrive to swim a few hundred yards. What say you, lads, are you any hands at swimming?"

"I can swim fairly enough," answered Frank; "I have been in the water for an hour on the coast where we lived; but Walter only learnt in the river at Merton, and I don't think he could buffet waves like these."

"Och, by the powers!" said Mike; "then it's ourselves as will be taking him on our shoulders, turn and turn. Won't we do that same, musha! It's the jewel of the world he is; and we'll be casting away our luck if we're losing him, intirely."

And now every exertion was made to bear up to the coast, as close as they could with safety. Fortunately the water was so clear that all the perils were plainly exposed. The wondrous works of the coral insects, in all the various stages of progress, were visible, and Walter was lost in such admiration, that the dangers that surrounded him were wholly forgotten.

"How astonishing! how delightful!" he exclaimed. "Do look at them, Frank. Could you believe that those minute creatures, the coral insects, could actually form islands? There are now millions of them here silently building rock upon rock, till, after many years, these rocks will rise above the water and become firm, dry land. What strange things there are among the works of the great God that we know little or nothing about while we live."

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"I have heared something of that sort of talk," said Tom to Freeman. "I've heared men say as how little worms makes these here reefs, as one knows how bees makes wax in their hives; but I never lent my ear much to that queer sort of yarn, 'cause, you see, I couldn't credit it. But I'll not say as how there mayn't be truth in it, if *he* talks on it in that straightforrard way; for, barring his being such a lubber at a bit of seamanship, there's an uncommon freight stowed in his head."

Frank, though not so well read in natural history as his friend, could still confirm the fact, so well known, of the insects building up the coral islands; and even the ignorant and careless Mike could not help listening to the lecture with which the intelligent little boy amused them, as the skilful seamen slowly made their way among the perilous, hidden rocks, against which they frequently grated, but still managed to escape serious injury. They were now within two hundred yards of a narrow strand, backed by high cliffs, and on this they fixed their eyes wistfully in trembling hope. But between them and the shore intervened a higher range of reefs, over which the breakers poured in a threatening manner, and against which it was in vain to expect the frail boat to hold out.

"Here, Mike," called out Tom, "you and Mr. Frank must hold off yon breakers as long as you can, and keep an eye on the young lad. There, hand me over the gun, we're like to try and save that; stow away the powder and shot to keep dry. Ay, ay! I can manage that biscuit-bag too on my back. Now then, I shoves off, and wades or swims, as I can, ashore with these things; and then steers back to you, messmates, with a chart of the passage."

Anxiously they watched their bold leader plunge through the pools, wade over the reefs, and avoid the higher rocks washed by the breakers, occasionally having to contend with some huge, rough wave, till he

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reached the strand. There he flung down the gun and bag, high and dry, and again entered the water, stopping at a reef which lay half-way between the boat and the shore, and examining it carefully before he returned to his companions.

"Now, my boys," said he, as he stepped into the boat, "now for some work; there, hold hard, my men, we must try to keep her together a bit longer." They pulled for a few yards more, then Tom said, "Now, Mike, step out with me and lend a hand," and they stepped out into four feet water, and drew the boat, while the two boys tugged at the oars, through a narrow opening in the reefs, till at length it was fairly wedged between two rocks, higher than the rest, while the waves beat with force against it.

"It's all over now, my boys," said Tom; "we must just save what we can; and she's no great loss, for, you see, she's stove in and not seaworthy. Hand me over that there spar—the broken oar; and you, young un, give us your hand, I must just heave you ashore on my back. Roll that great rug round you—now, mount, and hold on taut; and the spar will help me to pull in with my lading."

There was no denying Tom; he mounted Walter on his broad back, and made his way through the water, resting on the broken oar, and calling on the other two youths to follow him with what salvage they could make. The large portmanteau being the first thing that came to hand, the two men took it between them, and each steadying himself with an oar, they followed Tom through the breakers, and over the sharp, slippery reefs. More than once they tottered, and even fell; but, by assisting each other, they reached at last the spot which they had seen Tom examine, and where he now was resting on a broad, flat rock, of about twenty feet across, and not more than one foot below water.

"Land here, my boys," cried he, "the tide is running

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in, and in half an hour we shall be on dry ground, and can then make an easy passage ashore."

He had set down Walter to stand knee-deep in water; but this, with the burning sun above, was rather pleasant than otherwise; and the boy was entrusted with the care of the portmanteau till the three young men returned to the boat, to recover, if possible, the rest of the contents. It was already half filled with water, and it was with difficulty they extracted the wooden box, the bundles of clothes belonging to Tom and Mike, a canister of powder, a bag of shot, and an axe which had been found in a locker in the boat.

"We have not got the water-keg," said Frank.

"Let it be," said Tom, "we can carry no more. There's like to be water yonder, and we must take it in with our cups, you can pocket them; and then let's make off. The crazy craft is parting; we may take leave of her."

A huge rent had been made in the boat by the action of the waves. It was plain it could not hold together many minutes; and it was not without pain that the men left the little bark that had aided their escape from the ruthless Moody, and the loss of which left them without any means of leaving the unknown shore they were thus thrown upon.

On reaching again their resting-place, they found that the water had already fallen several inches, and Walter, seated on the portmanteau, which he had placed on the end, was gazing with delight on the bright-coloured fish darting about in the pools, the crabs and mussels clinging to the rocks, and the noisy sea-birds skimming over the surface of the water to pounce on the unwary inhabitants.

"One could almost be tempted by a mermaid," said he, "to dive down into this beautiful sea; it would be so delightful to see all that the water covers."

"We shall be safer on land, Wally," said Freeman. "See, in a very short time we shall be able to reach

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the shore in a hop, skip, and jump; and then, my boy, we must begin our regular Robinson Crusoe life."

"What! shall we build a hut, and make umbrellas of goat-skin?" asked the excited boy.

"That will depend on whether we meet with goats," answered Frank. "Besides, I fancy we may contrive more convenient umbrellas from the spreading leaves of yon tall palm-trees."

"Of course we can," answered the boy, looking anxiously at the water, and adding, "Tom, can you tell me what those little fluttering things are, which I see yonder above the water?"

"A pair of fins, and no mistake!" cried Tom, in a tone of horror. "What a close shave we have all had, lads! That fellow's missed his mark this morning; but we'll have to lay off here a bit; it will never do to weigh our anchor, and run into his jaws."

The monster made directly to the rock, which was by this time uncovered, and they drew together in the centre, that they might look in safety at the crafty shark, one of the most abhorred animals of God's creation. Walter could not help trembling, though he regarded with curiosity and interest the huge, ugly creature, with its hideous goggle eyes, and its enormous mouth, which seemed capable of swallowing the whole party.

"Ay, ay, Master Walter," said Tom, "what think you of your under-water garden there now, as you wanted a walk in? This is an ugly sort of mermaid now, isn't it? But it's not oft you'll get a sight of that there fellow so near shore; he's a keen hand, and keeps out at sea, chasing some likely craft for a prize. Now a slaver's a grand catch for him, he knows he has a chance of lots of grub thereaway, and he's no ways particular, black or white flesh comes all welcome to him. What an impudent rogue he is, coming to such close quarters! Now, wouldn't he like to board us?

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I've half a mind to have a dash at him, but what can one do with such a bit of a knife as this?" and Tom produced his pocket-knife, which, when he had opened, Walter thought resembled the carving-knife for a round of beef.

The greedy shark still circled the rock, and glared on the little party gathered upon it, and Frank inquired if there really was any danger of its springing upon them.

"Wouldn't I be plased to see the baste thry that same thrick?" said Mike, waving the broken oar over his head. "Wouldn't I give him the taste of my big shillala over his ugly head! Arrah, Mr. Frank, thin it's the rogue he is, and not the fool! Won't he choose out the best field for his fight, the spalpeen! and that's the wather altogether; and he's the baste to hold his own ground; and in coorse, my jewels, we'll be keepin' ours. It's little chance we'd be havin' av we let go the moorins. Sure, hasn't he got his eye upon us; and it's only one bite he'd be makin' at such a small mouthful as you, Master Walter?"

Walter shrunk back at this intimation, but could not forbear watching the cunning tricks of the shark as it darted about the pools, now swallowing a small shoal of the fishes, and putting the rest of the playful creatures to sudden flight, now grazing the very edge of the uncovered rock, and rolling his frightful eyes to observe the captives that it evidently considered to be its lawful prey.

"It must shove off soon," said Tom, "the tide is running down; and, greedy as it is, it's too keen to wait and be stranded."

While they stood impatiently watching for its departure, Tom had drawn a piece of cord from his capacious pocket, and lashed his knife firmly to the end of the oar; then, waiting till the animal turned on its back to open its awkward mouth and swallow a large fish, he suddenly plunged the sharp blade into

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the white underpart of the fish, thus left exposed. The blood spirted up, and the creature made a sudden spring, which actually brought it upon the rock, making the startled besieged party draw back in alarm. Then it darted again into the water, jerked the oar with such force that it snapped, and the wounded fish swam off to sea with Tom's valuable knife.

The vexed mate actually swore in his wrath, for which Walter reproved him, saying, "It was all fair, you know, Tom. You had attempted his life, and you could not expect him to be grateful for it. At all events, you have the satisfaction of having driven off our enemy, and Frank and I have knives, though they are certainly not so large and useful as yours."

"Wouldn't we betther be trotting when the coast is clare?" said Mike. "It's aisy sailing now, my boys, anyhow. It's hardly you'll nade to wet your feet. Plase to push off, Mr. Mate."

Tom looked gloomy and vindictive; but the moment was too propitious for landing to be neglected; so he took the hand of Walter, each taking up what he could carry, and Mike and Frank following with the portmanteau, they easily accomplished their landing, having merely to wade through some shallow pools left among the reefs; then leaving Walter on guard, the other three made a second trip to the rock, and brought the whole of their small possessions safely to shore. And now, freed from immediate danger, they looked round to examine the spot where Providence had thrown them.

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CHAPTER VII.

The First View of the Coast—A Turtle—Frank sets out Turtle-nesting—An Aldermanic Feast—The Shark again—The Sailors' Cruise—A Strange Meeting—An Englishman and a Christian.

"THIS looks like a snug boat harbour, enough," said Tom; "and more's the pity we have no boat to bring in."

The high cliffs, which seemed quite inaccessible, were hung over with creeping-shrubs, and were, on the spot where the men had landed, indented so as to form a narrow, sheltered nook, before which was spread a wild and lonely strand strewed with shells and masses of broken coral, and apparently untrodden by man.

"How calm and beautiful it is!" said Walter. "How thankful we ought to be to God, who has saved us from slavery, and the stormy sea, and the cruel shark, and given us this pleasant, safe refuge!"

"Sure, as you say, Master Walter," sighed Mike, looking round with a dismal countenance; "it's safe intirely; and it's not badly off we'll be for fish to kape us livin'; but sorra a sup of wather have I set my blessed eyes on; and mighty like a prison it is, seeing we'll be clever altogether to get out on it."

"Keep a decent tongue in thy head, and don't go and be unthankful, Mike," said Tom. "You see, this is where it is, masters; we, blue-jackets, as can sail our craft as we will, and make what port we like, and a little nigh rule the waves as we please ourselves; we're like enough, nows and thens, to lose sight altogether of Him as made us all, and hardly yield as how His arm can be stronger than our own. Then we somehow can never make time to think on Him,

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till it comes on us all at once, as how He's taken the helm out of our hands; and that He's our Great Captain. Could you just put up a bit prayer for us scamps, my good little lad?"

Walter did not presume to offer up prayers in his own words, when thus called upon; but he had his prayer-book in his chest, which he soon produced; and asking the men to kneel down, he read the prayers of thanksgiving after danger at sea; and the sublime words, though perhaps not fully comprehended by the ignorant men, fell with healing influence on their half-torpid souls; and they arose with lightened hearts to fulfil their duties with faith and energy.

"It's more shady higher up, lads," said Tom; "and this burning sun's bad to bide without water, so, come along,"—and they followed him, to penetrate further into the rocky niche, the lofty cliffs on each side producing a little shade. A hollow on one side offered a perfect shelter, and thither they removed their property, and sat down to consider what steps they should next take.

"If we had even a chance to push off," said Tom, "I'd as lief hold at our moorings a bit; for maybe the next tide may fetch up that ugly thief as sailed off with my knife. And more than that, Mr. Frank, I'll tell you, I've my doubts of yon company up aloft. They say as how they're a savage set of pirates hereabouts; if we're come ashore—as I take it we have—somewhere nor-west of that Madagascar, as we talked on. So it's a good job as we've made out this bit of a snug creek where we're out of sight of the rogues, if so be as we've landed unawares in the thick on them."

"At all events," said Frank, "I think, Tom, you and I had better take a stretch along the shore at low water; and try if we can find any access to the land above."

"Ay, ay, we're fittest for the trip," answered he; "and we'll leave Mike and Walter to keep watch over the freight. Now pull off, my boy."

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Then warily and watchfully the two young men directed their course to the north, seeing on the narrow strand the same scattered heaps of shells, weed, and coral, mingled with spars, cordage, and the accumulated wreck of a dangerous and unfrequented coast. Another recess in the rocks was filled with wreck, which they were tempted to stop and examine, and in the nook, dripping from the rocks above, they discovered to their great delight, a fall of cool, fresh water, which, however, was soon absorbed in the sandy shore below. A deep shell afforded them a drinking-cup, and refreshed with their draught, Frank proposed that they should return to bring up Mike and Walter.

"We'll consider about it," said Tom; "yon's a quiet snug harbour to lay up in, and we could easy fetch up water to it. We'll lay at anchor there for a day or so. Pity we lost our water-keg. Let's see if we cannot light on a sound cask among this wreck."

A small barrel was extricated from a pile of tangled weed, which, being half-buried in the sand, they judged must have lain there a considerable time. With an extempore hammer formed of two spars, they knocked out the head of the cask, and found it contained excellent vinegar, which had probably been wine when it was cast ashore, and had undergone that extra fermentation in its ungenial situation which had converted it into vinegar.

"Pity to start it out of the keg," said Tom. "You see, if so as we 're tied to live on fish, this will come in useful to make it eatable. Let's see if we can't pick up another water-butt."

They walked down to the water to examine some dark object they had observed there, and a cry from Tom summoned Frank to assist him in turning over a good-sized turtle which was basking lazily on the burning sand.

"Now, my boy," said Tom; "we shall be set to it to make an end of this tough-hearted fellow; and me

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without my knife, too. Hand us over that poor bit of a makeshift of yours, and you tack away to bring up that rusty iron bolt we saw yonder away. I think I can finish him with that."

Not sorry to leave the scene of butchery, Frank returned, and extricating a heavy bar of iron from the wreck, went back to Tom, who proceeded to complete the dispatch of the turtle, which they then drew up to the cliffs that the tide might not rob them of their prize.

"I'll be cutting away the shell," said Tom, "while you make a cruise after the nest, my boy; it will be in the sand, and not far off, depend on it."

Frank had had a good deal of early experience in bird-nesting, but in turtle-nesting he was not versed; and he rather wished that Walter had been his companion; for though the boy was as inexperienced as himself, his study of books of natural history made him a keen observer. However, Frank strolled along the beach, somewhat more attracted by the fragments of wrecked ships and boats of all nations, than by the appearances which might have pointed out to him the haunt of turtles, till suddenly his foot slipped into a hole, and though no crash followed, yet the state of his boot, when he drew it out, assured him that he had plunged among eggs.

He was excessively mortified at his misadventure, and rather ashamed of the result of his expedition; but on removing the sand he found such an immense quantity of eggs that he easily took out above fifty, of which the filmy skin, the substitute for the shell which covers the eggs of birds, was unbroken. Satisfied with this, he washed his hands and foot, put the eggs into his handkerchief and pockets, and returned with his prize to Tom, who had, he found, cut up the turtle, made a fire in a crevice of the rocks, placed some of the meat in the shell, covering it with vinegar; and then slung the shell over the fire suspended by cords

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to a stick which he had fixed across the angle of the rock. He was regarding, with great complacency, this cooking apparatus, and after Frank had again covered the eggs with sand in a secure corner till they were needed, the two successful foragers, leaving the turtle to be thoroughly cooked, set out to bring up Mike and Walter to partake of it.

"Now, my boys, has all gone smooth? what's your report?" asked Tom.

"We saw a sail at a very great distance," said Walter, "and I wanted to erect a signal, but Mike would not allow me. He fancied it might be the prahu of a pirate; and he says if we were captured by any of the pirates they would either kill us, or carry us off to be slaves."

"And that same's the thruth intirely," said Mike; "and I'm the boy as knows it, sure. A fair fight 's a fair thing, my jewels, anyhow; but sorra a bit are they minding thruth, or honesty, or fair play; not a bit; it's all murther, and thieving, and chating with them."

"Ay, ay, you're right, said Tom; "we must not be in a hurry to hang out our colours. We must lie snug on this coast till we're sure of our craft. But heave anchor, my boys, and come along to turn into mess, and see what top hands you've had to cater for you."

As they were all reluctant to leave their property unprotected, it was at length agreed that they should move their quarters to the spot where water could be conveniently obtained, and once more with their loads they moved on, headed by Tom, to the fortunate hollow where meat and water were so amply provided for them. They arranged all their packages, placing the large portmanteau for a table, sought up some flat shells for plates, and some small mussel-shells for spoons, Walter's golden christening offering being at last found useful; and by that time the turtle was

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cooked, served in its shell, and the guests, hungry with their walk and their labour, ate their luxurious dinner with an appetite worthy of a turtle-feast, even if it had been cooked by a more scientific hand than that of Tom Heartley.

"Arrah, see then!" said Mike; "isn't this the land of rale plenty? and wouldn't it be a sin and a shame for us to be turning our backs on good luck when it comes? Wouldn't we rig up our berths hereaway, Mr. Mate, and lay off for the orders, and ate our mate here in the captin's cabin?"

"It's a very dirty cabin, Mike," said Walter, looking round in disgust on the heaps of wreck which emitted an intolerable stench of putrid fish and decayed vegetable matter.

"Och! then, master," answered Mike; "isn't it being over dilicate you are altogether? Sure, had ye seen our cabin in Tipperary, and the pigs, poor sowls, not taking to a clane house, and the prater-skins and the ould jackets, worra! Thin, it would be hard to find a clane swate bit there anyhow; but see now, my jewel, didn't we love ivery hole and corner there, where we'd been livin hundreds of years in that same."

"Well, well, Mike," said Frank; "but we have not lived hundreds of years here, and we might as well start clean and fair; if we have to make a home of it, do pray let us try to cleanse it a little."

By the aid of broken oars, and flat pieces of board, they shovelled the little hollow clean, and carried away the piles of wreck below water-mark, that they might be washed off by the tide. Then they dug out a basin in the sand, and lined it with flat oyster-shells, for the water to fall into. After this, Tom and Walter walked down to the sea, attracted by an object larger than the usual heaps of wreck, and Tom recognized with satisfaction their old enemy, the shark, washed ashore dead, with the valuable knife still remaining in it, which they drew out uninjured.

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"Now, what say you, Walter, to a shark steak for supper?" said Tom to the boy, who was examining with great interest the huge monster, now harmless. "It's rare good eating, I can tell you."

"I couldn't eat it, Tom," answered Walter. "Why, perhaps this horrid creature has been fattened on human flesh."

"Ay, ay, like enough," said the man. "I've seen, before this, a fellow cut up with a few limbs in him, and sometimes a pilot-coat, as hadn't been easy to disgest."

"And how could you eat an animal that had been fed on your fellow-creatures?" asked Walter.

"Why, you see, my boy," answered he, "a bit of fresh meat isn't to be had for asking for out at sea; and when we see a lot of smoking steaks lying on a dish before us, and we sharp set, it would never do to be questioning how that meat were fed."

"That may be, Tom," answered Walter; "but we are not sharp set, thank God! So pray leave this disgusting creature for the gulls and cormorants. You know the turtle is a clean feeder; it lives on the sea-weed, which it finds growing beneath the water, and it is this food which gives its flesh the delicious taste."

"Well, books *is* useful," replied Tom. "Now, I never considered where them queer land-and-water beasts picked up their living; but I reckon you'll be right; and where there's one turtle you're sure to light on a ship's company on them; so there's no need to trouble with this here ugly fellow; indeed, my stomach is about set again him now. But it's a lucky chance I've got back my knife."

More than once during that day a distant sail was observed by the watchful castaways; but unless it had been near enough to be made out satisfactorily, they shrunk from attracting a notice that might have brought them into danger. They were amply pro-

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vided with food, free to ramble about the strange coast, and requiring no shelter, except from the sun, in that delicious climate, they felt that there was no necessity to risk unknown perils for uncertain advantages; and for some days they enjoyed their easy repose; not even attempting to climb the abrupt cliffs to extend their researches into the country beyond them.

But after they had been a week on shore, they began to tire of turtle and fish diet; the cheese was nearly finished, and the biscuit-bag very low. The two sailors, though amused for a time by hearing Walter read tales of adventure, or descriptions of animals, grew weary of a life so inactive and monotonous; they became restless and discontented, and looked with a pining curiosity at the heights above.

"Mike, my boy, we must make a cruise," said Tom; "there's no standing a dead calm. What say you to a run up these here cliffs? We must never seek out a reg'lar tracked road, for ten to one that would turn out to be the pirates' road; but it's no more, you see, than going up to the masthead, and it's little we heed that. Come, man, we cannot spend our lives among crawling turtles and screaming gulls. So, hear ye, lads; keep a sharp look-out, and pipe loud if ye want help. We must have the gun with us, for fear we fall in with the murdering pirates."

The two boys were quite contented to be left alone; they had no fears in that quiet place. They looked upon the rude rocky nook as their home, and, keeping it in sight, they amused themselves with strolling about under the cliffs, or by the edge of the water, where Walter especially ever found some strange novelty. The men had chosen to direct their course to the north; and after watching them till they were out of sight, the boys rambled a little way in the opposite direction, and then sat down beneath the shade of a jutting rock, still not out of sight of their

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dwelling, and rather enjoying this quiet stroll together, which recalled the brief holiday moments of their school life.

"You are not tired of this kind of life, are you, Frank?" asked Walter. "It is very peaceful and pleasant; and if it was not for the sad thoughts of dear papa, I could live here very happily. To be sure, I should like to have more books."

"Wally, are you in your senses?" answered his friend. "What a soft fellow you are! Why, a hog in his sty leads as useful a life, man, and, after all, he is good to eat when he is dead. Whoever would think of two active young lads like us, after we had made as much mischief in the world as we could, sitting down like old men to feast on turtle, and sleep lazily in the sun, not caring a bit for anybody but ourselves? It's not like you, Wally."

"You are always right, Frank," said Walter. "I know I am often very foolish, and wicked too. It was my fault that we ran away from school; and now I was so selfish as to want you to lead an idle, useless life. I am very sorry for all I've done, Frank. Ought we to go back to Doctor Markham, do you think, if we can hail a homeward-bound ship?"

"We are not likely to hail any ships here," answered Frank. "They all give this rock-bound coast a wide berth, depend on it—let alone those pirate stories, which, after all, may not be true; for we have seen nothing of prahus or pirates. But one thing is clear, Wally, I can never show my face at Merton school again. My uncle will do no more for me, and I must make my own way in the world now, somehow or another."

"We may have to die in this strange place, Frank," sighed Walter. "How I wish we had not such a weight on our consciences."

The boys remained many minutes silent and thoughtful, when suddenly they were struck with

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wonder and awe at hearing a clear, deep voice slowly repeat the words, "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God."

"Who can it be?" whispered Walter, timidly.

"An Englishman and a Christian, God be thanked," answered Frank.

"Then I will speak," said Walter; and with his sweet, young voice, he continued the beautiful words of the Psalm, which was quite familiar to him—

"My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"

"Whoever you be," spoke the strange voice, "you are surely of our persecuted but unconquerable faith. Stand forth, unfortunate Christian, whom God, in His inscrutable wisdom, has permitted to visit these inhospitable shores."

The boys walked round the jutting point of the rock, and saw before them the tall, meagre form of a middle-aged man, clothed in a loose robe of white cotton reaching to his feet, and a large hat of palm-leaf. His countenance was pale and melancholy, worn more by care than by years, and indicative of meekness and humility. He advanced with extended hands to greet the boys, saying—

"So young, and alone! poor children! Is it from the persecutions of the heathen rulers of this unhappy country, or from the cruel hands of the pirates that you have escaped; and whither do you hope to flee?"

"We have escaped from the misery of a slave-ship, sir," said Frank, "and also from the dangers of the sea. We have been cast away on this coast, and have remained many days on this solitary strand, not daring to attempt to scale the cliffs, which cut off our approach inland."

"Thank God, you did not succeed in doing so, young man," said the stranger. "You would probably have then fallen into the hands of a horde of wretches,

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whose whole existence is devoted to deeds of bloodshed and plunder, as well by land as by sea. Even now, while we talk, their keen eyes may be marking us;" and he looked fearfully to the heights.

"Come to our encampment, as we call it, sir," said Frank. "There we shall be sheltered, and can talk in safety."

CHAPTER VIII.

Chased by Pirates—The Strand deserted—A Providential Asylum—The Church in the Rocks—The Silent Congregation—The Wonders of the Subterranean Castle—The Confession of the School-boys—The Sailors in the Pirates' camp—Mr. Sinclair proposes to tell his story.

THEY led the interesting stranger to the secluded recess where they dwelt, and his eyes glistened with pleasure as he looked on the books which the boys had arranged on their wooden box. He took up one after another,—Virgil, Bossuet, Shakspeare, and, looking attentively at his young companions, he said, "You are no sailor boys. How came you to be on board a slave-ship?"

Walter held down his head and blushed, and Frank said, "We are two runaway school-boys, sir, that's the truth, and we are right served for our fault; but, indeed, we had great provocations and great temptations."

"So have all men," said the stranger. "The great enemy of mankind takes care of that. Blessed are they who ask and receive strength to crush the serpent's head. Let your punishment be your warning, my sons. But, tell me, were you two only saved?"

"There were, besides, two kind-hearted sailors"

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answered Frank, "who have been capital friends to us. Here they come. What can have happened?"

As he spoke, Tom and Mike arrived breathless, and the former, before he saw the stranger, who stood aside, cried out, "We must sail off, without delay, my lads. We are chased by the enemy. There is nothing for it but to lighten, by throwing overboard the cargo." Then, perceiving the stranger, he said, "Halloo, my man! what flag do you sail under?"

"The flag of the one true God, amidst a fleet of heathens," said he, with a smile. "If you are true and faithful Christians, I will promise to shelter you all; but no time must be lost, for pursuit would be fatal. Remove all that belongs to you. I hope there is yet time to save everything, and hasten to follow me."

The men caught up boxes and bags, and filled their pockets with the loose articles lying about; the stranger, himself, carefully collecting all the books and papers; and after looking attentively round to see that nothing of importance was left behind, he led the way close along the base of the cliffs, past the place where they first landed, for some distance, till, turning into a little creek, they perceived a long ladder raised against the rocks. He mounted this first himself, and was followed by the rest to a broad shelf or terrace, half-way from the summit, where they rested, and drew up the ladder, to replace it in such a manner as to enable them to reach the heights; a proceeding which Tom and Mike protested against as useless trouble; for, if they could but have hoisted up the boxes, anybody but a lubber might have run up the cliffs.

Before they left the ladder, their leader looked cautiously above the cliff to see if all was safe; and then one after another they landed on the cliff, once more drew up the ladder, and followed their guide over rugged, bush-covered ground, amongst piles of

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broken rocks, grown over with green streamers, till they reached a perpendicular lofty rocky wall, where a higher range of cliffs commenced. They looked dismayed, at this abrupt termination of their road; but their new friend pointing to the face of the rock, which was luxuriantly clothed with thick bushes, requested the men to raise the ladder against this wall.

Then the good man ascending the ladder, showed to his followers a small opening, into which he crept, and taking from the hands of Walter, who followed him, the package he carried, he drew the boy through the aperture after him. The rest speedily followed, the ladder was drawn in, and the hanging bushes carefully restored to their place; and the astonished men turned round to examine their new abode. But the voice of their deliverer now called on them to render thanks to God, for their escape from death; and in this duty even the careless sailors earnestly joined; for they, especially, were aware of the perils from which they had so miraculously been snatched.

The cave in which they now found themselves was low, dark, and wholly bare; not a semblance of habitation or comfort existed; and the boys sighed and even shuddered as they contemplated the cheerless exchange from the pure open air, the blessed light, and the freedom of their life on the sea-shore.

After a pause of some minutes, Tom said, "Your cabin is poorly rigged, master. I think you'll hardly do with extra hands in your narrow craft."

"You have not seen my cabins yet, my good man," said their host, good-naturedly; and moving to a corner of the dark cave, he raised a large flat stone, resting it on two high blocks of wood which he placed at the sides, and exposed to view a still darker abyss, from which even the bold sailors shrunk back.

"Happily no one would venture to descend into this hollow," said their leader, who now told them his

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name was Sinclair, "who was not acquainted with the secret of these caves."

He then lowered the ladder, which seemed to rest on some unseen foundation below, and continued, "Now, my friends, for the present leave all your luggage in the anteroom, and descend fearlessly after me; and after I have shown you my castle, if you are content to become inhabitants of it, we will return to bring in your property, and to close our entrance more effectually."

With some misgivings, the guests descended after their host into this black vault, and when their feet rested on the stony ground they discovered that they had entered a narrow passage of solid rock; and clinging to the damp slimy walls, they went forward slowly, winding now to the right, now to the left, for at least a quarter of an hour, all absolutely silent from excitement, not unmingled with alarm. Then some faint gleams of light shot through crevices in the right-hand wall; the passage became wider and loftier, and they could now see many other passages branching off right and left, which would render the way to a stranger a perfect labyrinth. The small fissures through which the light gleamed also admitted the air, and this served to cheer the bewildered visitors, and they inwardly congratulated themselves, at any rate, on the security of a retreat which seemed to promise few other attractions.

At length this more open passage, leaving all the branches, terminated in an open arch, through which they passed into a lofty, spacious, and almost circular cavern, or rather, a subterranean church, for such it seemed to be. The roof had the appearance of being regularly vaulted, and was hung with streamers of elegant creeping plants, which had forced their way through narrow fissures above, and which, at the same time, admitted a "dim religious light," peculiarly harmonizing with the solemn scene. On

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the right hand, however, a wider cleft, ornamented like those in the roof with natural green curtains of foliage, opened a view to the sea, which dashed not only against, but absolutely underneath this rocky cave; for the hoarse sound of the waves was heard below the floor of the church.

Before this opening was a stone altar, decently covered with coloured matting, upon which were laid the books of the offices of the Church, and mats were placed round for a congregation of whom no traces could be seen. A reading-desk, neatly made of bamboo, a number of bamboo seats, and a hollowed stone baptismal font completed the fittings of the simple, solemn, and lonely place of worship. Frank and Walter uncovered their heads as they entered, and the sailors followed their example. "But where are the people who belong to this church, sir?" asked Walter, in a subdued voice, looking at the seats and mats.

Mr. Sinclair sighed, and answered, "I have seen this altar surrounded by pious Christians, who had clung to the true faith, defying the fires of persecution. I will show you now where these devoted worshippers are."

He led them through an opening in the side, opposite to the altar, into a smaller cave, where, on shelves hewn out of the rock were deposited the dead inclosed in coffins of woven bamboo.

"Here lie my beloved flock," said he. "I am the last of a little body of fugitives, whom God rescued from their infidel persecutors. Here is also my empty coffin; but who shall place my mortal remains within it? Here lie the mouldering forms of all those beloved ties that bound me to earth; yet from their bright abodes above they call on me still to live, to persevere; there may be yet work to do on earth before God calls me to my rest. I do not shrink from it; and in words which even your rough sailors will comprehend, I would say,

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"'What, though the mast be now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding anchor lost, * * *
We will not from the helm, to sit and weep;
But keep our course, though the rough winds say no'"

Tom looked approbation, and evidently began to consider the mysterious stranger a man of some sense. They now returned through the church to the passage by which they had entered it, and retracing their steps a few yards, passed through an opening which was now at their right into another rocky chamber, where the embers of a fire smouldering in a niche, and cooking utensils and crockery arranged on shelves hewed in the rock, showed that it was used as a cooking-place. It was lighted only, like the passage, by crevices above.

"This is my kitchen," said Mr. Sinclair, "and here is my most valuable resource;" and in one corner of the cave he showed them a fountain of pure water dropping from above, and falling into a basin which had been hollowed to receive it, and from which a channel carried off the surplus to a place where an opening of profound depth received it, to be finally swallowed up in the insatiable ocean.

Tom and Mike were now at home, and rubbed their hands as they looked round on an ample supply of convenient cooking utensils, iron kettles, frying-pan, cocoanut bowls, bark buckets, and porcelain cups and plates.

"Now let us discharge our freight, Mike," said Tom; and the men produced from their pockets a considerable quantity of turtles' eggs, grumbling that the pirates had stopped them, or they would have had the turtle.

Mr. Sinclair smiled as he said, "This will do, my men; you have provided us with a luxurious dinner; now come forward to my sitting-room, and let me hear the strange circumstances which have procured me the unexpected pleasure of companions in my solitude."

Opposite to the entrance into the kitchen another opening conducted them into a lofty and spacious cave,

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which evidently owed much to art. The walls were hewn quite smooth, and several apertures had been enlarged and cut down even to the ground, affording a wide view of the sea, and an abundant supply of air and light, though the creeping shrubs were allowed to droop over them sufficiently to conceal them from view without; and Mr. Sinclair pointed out that he could, when he chose to indulge in lighting a torch, suspend thick mattings before the openings, to prevent the light from being observed by any night-prowling pirates. The floor was covered with matting, tables, and seats of bamboo, several books, a telescope, some children's toys, and some traces of women's work scattered round, gave the apartment an appearance of civilization, and even home comfort, quite unexpected in this strange subterranean retreat.

The boys turned an inquiring glance at the work-table and the toys, and Mr. Sinclair sighed as he answered their look in these words: "Relics of my past happiness, which I cannot bear to remove. Day by day I gaze on them, and fancy I see the forms of my lost ones: then I comfort myself by the promise, 'They are not dead, but sleep.' But I must not dwell selfishly on my own sorrows; tell me now who you are, and why you are here."

Frank told without reserve the story of their school-life, their unfortunate voyage, and their wreck on the coast. Then Tom concluded by relating how Mike and he had that morning wandered along the shore for a considerable distance in a northerly direction, till they reached a spot where the ascent was comparatively easy, and even seemed to be trodden. Without much consideration they climbed the path, and made their way through a thick wood that crowned the summit, till a sudden opening showed them a number of huts erected on the high banks of a broad river flowing to the sea. Children in a state of nature were rolling about in sport on the ground;

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women of dark complexion, but gaily dressed, were employed, some in weaving fine matting, some pounding nuts or grain ; while several men, who appeared to be sick or aged, were reclining on mats lazily smoking.

The two unlucky intruders saw at once they had fallen into a snare, and turned to flee ; but it was too late ; the women had seen them, and raised a loud cry, and the men sprung up and seized their weapons. Tom thought it was advisable to act boldly, so faced round and fired his gun to create a little panic ; and then Mike and he fled with all the speed they could make, and leaped down the descent of the cliffs with desperate energy. Once on the beach, they never ventured to look behind them, though certain they were pursued ; indeed one spear fell very near, though it happily missed them. At length, in turning round a projecting cliff, they glanced behind them, and rejoiced to see their pursuers at a safe distance ; probably they were not strong enough to keep up with the fleet steps of the active sailors. But still aware that they could not escape discovery, if they did not find means to leave the narrow strand, they did not relax their speed, though, as Tom said, "I thought about how we were to get off over and over again ; but somehow I could make out no chart for us to sail by ; and one thing is clear, Master Frank, we must have been boarded, and cut to pieces, if we hadn't fallen in with a friendly flag."

"To God be the praise and glory," said Mr. Sinclair. "Never forget the providential escape from certain death that you have this day had, my good men. If you had fallen into the hands of those blood-stained wretches, they would have slain you on the spot ; and if you had even been only wounded by one of their spears—they are base enough to poison their weapons,—no skill could have saved you. Now, having been seen, complete seclusion can only hide you from the crafty plots of these villains, and you

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must be content to remain in this sanctuary till pursuit is wearied. We will remove all your property hither, and secure the entrance ; and fortunately, my frugal stores, with economy, will be sufficient for us all for some days. I never venture out for fruits or shell-fish till I have counted all the prahus go out to sea ; for time has taught me the number and the strength of these marauding vessels. Then the danger is lessened : it is rarely any able men are left behind ; the aged men are few—for the mode of life pursued by these desperate adventurers usually cuts them off young,—and the women rarely leave the den where they are fully employed with their children and their hard labours. Now follow me once more, my men. I am accustomed to these dark passages, and I rarely use a light, so apprehensive I am of awakening suspicion ; though the actual discovery of my retreat seems almost impossible."

The packages were lowered, and placed in a small interior cave which opened from the large sitting-room, as they called it. This, Mr. Sinclair told the boys, was to be their sleeping apartment. Several similar excavations—some natural, others formed or enlarged by art—existed in this curious subterranean labyrinth, which had once conveniently sheltered a considerable number of inhabitants, and where mattresses were already spread for the new guests.

After they had cleared away their property, the blocks of wood were removed, the slab which covered the entrance was carefully restored, and the ladder removed. Then Mr. Sinclair pointed out the improbability of even the opening being ever discovered, and the still greater improbability of any one daring to penetrate into the dark chasm it revealed.

Tom and Mike undertook at once all the kitchen duty, and soon prepared omelettes of turtles' eggs, to which Mr. Sinclair added some cakes of coarse bread, and very great was the enjoyment of the guests to be

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once more indulged with the decencies of plates, dishes, and spoons, and to have pure fresh water at pleasure.

After dinner, Mr. Sinclair proposed to tell them the cruel circumstances which had driven him to seek this strange shelter, and gathering around him, they prepared to listen to his story.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Sinclair's Story—The Schoolmaster in Madagascar—The Persecutions of the Christians—The Pilgrim Fugitives—The Happy Recluses—First Alarms—Death in the Caves—The Solitary Mourner—Scarcity of Provisions.

"SOME years ago," he began, "a flourishing and successful English mission existed in Madagascar. Many worthy and self-denying missionaries came out, and were not only tolerated, but revered; and Christianity, with its lovely results, was gradually striking root in this heathen land. The slave-trade was abolished; and men, who had lived only for war, desired to learn the arts of peace.

"My father was one of the earliest apostles of the faith in this country; he left me in England a schoolboy; and, naturally devoted to study, I became in time the teacher of a school of some importance; and married early. But the health of my wife became delicate, and I had the sorrow to learn that only the removal to a warmer climate could save her life. It was then I resolved to resign my school in England, and join my father's mission in this country, as schoolmaster to his little flock of natives; and I was warmly welcomed, as well by him as by many of the leading men who were his converts and his supporters.

"I soon acquired the Malagasy language, and pre-

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pared books in it, and I found my pupils quick to acquire, and ardent to obtain knowledge. Our schools were filled with children; our congregation was numerous and earnest. The health of my dear Anna improved, and I had two sweet children born in this strange land.

"In the mean time, the number of English missionaries increased; but with the usual frailty of humanity, these Christian men did not always practise the pure and holy doctrine they taught to others. Many were deficient in the qualities of meekness and forbearance, so essentially necessary to those who are employed to introduce the mild religion of Christ among the heathen. The chiefs clung to early prejudices and habits, which sometimes checked the efforts of the missionaries, who imprudently set about extirpating these habits, by violent denunciations and threats of eternal damnation, instead of gentle remonstrance and gradual labours to improve; and this unfortunate rashness created a spirit of vindictive opposition to their doctrines, which wanted but opportunity to break out in flames."

"But why are any men chosen to be missionaries," asked Walter, "who are not really good, that their example may be useful, as well as their words?"

"Ah! my dear child," said Mr. Sinclair, "where are such men to be found? All men on earth are fallible. God alone is good. It is, in the first place, very difficult to find well-educated men willing to abandon home, and kindred, and all the enjoyments of social life, and to risk ease, and intellectual enjoyments, and even life itself, and too often the lives of all who are dear to them, for the sake of fulfilling these important duties. It is certain that the volunteers who join this sacred cause are earnest, and it is always hoped that the spirit which prompts them to devote themselves, will guide their actions. Thus they are joyfully accepted. But temptations to evil surround us at every

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moment; and he who thinketh he standeth may be the first to fall. God strengthen us all!

"The hour of vengeance arrived for the unbelieving nobles; the intelligent king, who had so long protected and encouraged the arts of civilization, and the doctrines of peace, died. The successor he nominated was but for a short time permitted to live; he was assassinated by these pagan conspirators; and the queen, now in authority, was surrounded by those powerful chiefs, who dreaded that progress of knowledge which might curtail their power and privileges. They easily prevailed on her to withdraw her protection from the Christian institutions, and it was not long before a decree was issued, prohibiting the diffusion of the new doctrines, and commanding the teachers to give up their books, and leave the country for ever.

"It is the nature of true religion to be strengthened by persecution. Though many missionaries were driven from the country, and many of the native Christians even fled to the Mauritius, the Tree of Life had been planted, and could not be extirpated. Some few of the teachers had yet escaped the keen scrutiny of the spies, and continued, in remote districts, still to foster the precious seed. The wrath of the pagan rulers grew fierce, and every European or native who persisted in keeping one day in the week holy, in open acts of worship of the true God, was fined or imprisoned. It was then that the French and English governments interfered, and sent ships of war to remonstrate with the Malagasy government, or to redress the grievances of their own countrymen. A conflict ensued, the foreign vessels were chased from the coast, and the fire of persecution raged more furiously than ever; slavery, and even death, became the doom of those who persisted in their adherence to the truth.

"My father and I, with our little congregation, were long protected and saved from annoyance by the son of

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the queen, who had himself become a Christian. But when the fury of persecution reached its height; when the fire and the sword had their victims, sparing neither sex nor age; when the terrors of the Tarpeian rock were revived, and living men were hurled over a precipice three hundred feet in height, calling on the name of their Saviour as they were dashed to pieces on the granite rocks below; then our royal friend, by threats or bribes, succeeded in blinding the officials who were commissioned to arrest us, and procured us the means of flight.

"Accompanied by many devoted adherents, we escaped to the interior of the country, and there we encountered one of the powerful nobles of the kingdom, who was secretly a Christian, and greatly attached to my father and to me. To us he communicated an important secret, known only to himself, the last of his family, who had rigorously kept this secret confined to themselves. He put us in possession of the plan of a retreat which was discovered, and afterwards enlarged and improved by a party of persecuted Christians above a century before, among whom an ancestor of his own was a leading person. He survived the rest of the community, and the secret of the sanctuary was bequeathed by him to his children, to be preserved in the family, and never revealed except for the benefit of men who were under persecution for the sake of the Gospel.

"He described to us the exact spot where the caves lay, the peculiar features by which we could distinguish the rocks, and the mode of entrance; and he promised that, when the ardour of pursuit subsided, he would visit us, bring us such supplies as we needed, and if all hope of the restoration of our privileges failed, to aid us in leaving the country. Before we parted, he procured for us litters for my father, who was aged and infirm, and for the women and children.

"We were twenty in number; ten strong men, my

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aged father, four women, and five children. Of these, only my father, myself, and my family were Europeans; the rest were native Christians who were faithful and attached to their pastor, and who had chosen to adhere to him in his banishment and danger, rather than deny their faith, or seek other islands to find strangers who would neither understand their language, nor sympathize in their distress.

"It was fortunately the dry season when we set out on our pilgrimage to cross the island. We were guided only by the chart drawn out for us by our noble friend, who had marked upon it the stations of danger, and the scattered oases of the faith, which were even then not rare in the interior. We took with us as much flour, and other useful provision, as we could conveniently carry, in addition to the necessary tools and utensils, books, and such changes of clothes as European habits, at least, required; and from our Christian brethren we received on our way such hospitality as their means afforded. Besides which, the rich plains we crossed produced rice and fruits in abundance, and were all well watered.

"Thus plentifully supplied with food, we passed on without molestation, crossed the mountain-pass indicated on our chart without difficulty; and our journey might even have been agreeable, had we not been fugitives from our homes, and ever in danger of being detected by the agents of the vindictive government, who were spread over the whole island. It is true we were armed, and bold in defence of our families; and by God's help we escaped all these perils, and finally reached this rock—too remarkable in its appearance and position to be mistaken.

"It was evening when we arrived; but our carpenters had been at work for the last two days, and a ladder was already completed to aid our entrance to the desired shelter. I carefully inspected the face of the rock, and luckily observed some huge bats issue

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from a certain spot, and as I knew these creatures do not build in bushes, but in caves, I directed the ladder to be raised to the place from which I had seen the bats come. I mounted it first myself, discovered the opening beneath the bushes, and in a short time we were all inmates of the outer cave, which was then in a filthy state, and thickly peopled with the hideous huge bat, or flying-fox, to the great terror of our children. But after our stores and the ladder were drawn up, we dispersed the original possessors of the retreat by lighting a fire; and then, after joining in thanksgiving to God for our preservation, we watched and slept alternately, till the morning light gleaming through the bushes awoke us to action.

"Provided with the plan of the labyrinth, we soon penetrated to the church, which we found still contained the altar and the pulpit, and then visited the other caves. I saw with great satisfaction that much work would be required for the comfort, and much might be accomplished for the improvement of the apartments. The openings that looked upon the sea might be safely and profitably enlarged; the matting, now decayed by time, must be replaced by new; seats and tables were needed; and all these labours would employ the hands and thoughts of our people, and thus preserve their health and cheerfulness in their imprisonment; nor did we delay a day in beginning a useful course of employment.

"As at that time we were not aware that we were in a dangerous neighbourhood, parties went out daily to cut bundles of the wild rice, for food and for mattresses, to fish, to hunt the wild boar, or to bring in wood for making useful furniture, or for fuel. The women wove matting or cloth for garments with the filaments of the palm. We pressed the *Papyrus nilotica* to form paper; our pens were made, as you see, of slender bamboos, which we hardened in the fire, and our ink was prepared from the sap of a tree.

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I was thus provided with the means of continuing the education of the young; for we had brought with us the translations of rudimentary books, and of the Gospels, and my father gave daily lectures to the community on Scripture history, the moral duties, and the pure doctrines of Christianity; and even in our captivity the voice of praise and glad thanksgiving rose to heaven.

"One unfortunate day three of our hunters had pursued a wild boar to some distance towards the north, when, suddenly, to their surprise and consternation, they came upon a large party of fierce-looking men, stretched upon the ground under the trees, before a stockaded fort. The piles of plunder and weapons of defence that lay round them convinced the alarmed hunters that they had entered a nest of pirates. Though they had fire-arms, they knew it was hopeless to oppose twelve or fifteen desperate men, and that their only hope of escape was flight; and before the pirates could rise and take up their spears, the fugitives had gained a considerable advantage of distance, urged on to incredible efforts by the thoughts of the desperate alternative.

"Well acquainted with the intricacies of the forests, the hunters led their pursuers through many windings to deceive them, and at intervals discharged their guns in hopes rather to alarm than to wound the pirates, and thus to divert them from the pursuit. This seemed to be successful, and enabled the agitated men to gain the ladder which stood to receive them, to enter, and withdraw the evidence of their retreat before their enemies were near enough to observe the mode of their escape. The pirates were seen to pass the rocks, examining every bush and hollow for their victims, without any suspicion they were so near, and, finally, to proceed towards the south, still in dogged pursuit.

"Truly thankful as we were for the escape of our brave hunters, this event was a fatal blow to the peace

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and comfort of our lives. We were now convinced that the prahus we had so often seen sailing before our windows were the destructive vessels of this horde; and it was only when we had ascertained that the whole fleet, which we now remarked to be ten prahus, was out, that we ventured cautiously to a short distance from the cave. The women and children we thought it advisable to keep entirely secluded; as they would not have been able to escape if surprised.

"Eight years have elapsed since that time. Why should I dwell on the painful details? We had but one gleam of happiness during each year: this was the annual visit of our noble friend and patron, Ramarla, who always brought us bountiful supplies of corn, sugar, wine, and other useful stores, which were left concealed for us in a pit in the adjacent forest, that the servants who attended him, though they were also Christians, might not be admitted into the secret of the retreat, and we afterwards transferred them to our abode.

"But confinement, anxiety, the want of fresh meat, and the close moist atmosphere in the unhealthy rainy season, produced the effects that might be expected. Our beloved children were the first victims death claimed, and they were soon followed, one after another, by the mourning mothers; then my venerable father, after burying my Anna and her darlings, bowed down his aged head, and yielded up his soul to God. I was stupified by my accumulated sorrows. I must have become absolutely deadened, but for the necessity of exerting myself to supply, as far as my humble efforts could avail, the place of my lamented father. I continued, while I had one hearer left, to perform the daily services of the Church; and in my duties and my intercourse with my God, I felt my bitter afflictions alleviated. Why should I go on? All left me! I am alone! My little band of Christians are gathered to a brighter inheritance! I daily visit the cemetery,

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and say, 'They are not dead: but sleep.' But I am not happy, for my life is purposeless. I can submit to live, but not to live uselessly. Of late, I have been endeavouring to make up my mind once more to seek the world, and either to fall by the hands of my enemies, or fulfil my labours amongst friends. I have only delayed my decision till my noble friend Ramarla shall make his annual visit, which, according to his unfailing regularity, will be in a month. Then I shall take his advice, whether it would be advisable to attempt once more to re-assemble a school in some quiet spot in the island; or, under the powerful protection of him and our Christian prince, to attempt to obtain a passage in some vessel bound to the Mauritius; a plan which, if you also desire to accompany me, will become more difficult, but, at the same time, much more tempting."

"Oh! sir," said Walter, "all we desire is, to get to India."

"That would not be difficult," replied Mr. Sinclair, "if we could but once reach the Mauritius. But our first steps must be hazardous—may be, fatal; for you, as Christians and foreigners, will fall, as well as myself, under the ban of this severe government."

"We can keep a close mouth, sir," said Tom. "Mike and I is not particular to a shade. We'd say we were anything, as would be agreeable to them there sharp pollis."

"That would be a mortal sin, young man," said Mr. Sinclair. "Our blessed Saviour has spoken these awful words, 'Whoso shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.' Remember this, unthinking man; be strong in faith, and proclaim to the heathen that a true Christian is proud to own the Lord in whom he trusts."

Tom was silent, and look confused; but Mike replied, "Arrah, master, but ye're a hard captain. It's little we're minding such things afloat, barrin' a bit of

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a prayer afore we're piped to quarters, or when we're tugging hard at the pumps, or, maybe, breakers ahead; and then somehow it comes nat'ral, but short enough; seeing time's flying, and death grinning right ahead."

"And when death really lays his cold hand upon you, unhappy man," said Mr. Sinclair, "you will cry out in vain for a respite, and weep bitterly that you have wasted the precious hours of life. A Christian has always time to think on God; and if he thinks with love and gratitude, every thought will become a prayer. Let it be so with you from this moment, I beseech you; and when the certain hour of trial shall come, you will find strength to cry, 'The Lord, he is God!'"

From that time Mr. Sinclair laboured to bring the two ignorant sailors into the way of truth. With Tom, who had been accustomed in the little cabin to hear the reading, and join the prayers of his two young friends, the task was not difficult. He was not slow to acknowledge his past transgressions, and to feel and own the might and mercy of God. The volatile and careless Mike was long before he could be brought to see the reality of his sinful life, and to feel an earnest desire of repentance; but Mr. Sinclair was kind and indefatigable in his instructions, the quiet and orderly arrangement of the duties and employments of the little community, though monotonous, was favourable to sober reflection, and the benefit, though slow, was certain.

The two boys spent much time in reading and in conversing with their benevolent host, and while they derived advantage from it, his cheerfulness and hopes gradually returned, and they discussed their future plans daily, sketching a pilgrimage across the island, that they might escape from some friendly and little-frequented port. The ports at the west of the island were too populous and well guarded to be safe for the

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fugitives; and it was therefore across the mountains they must wander to escape from the east coast.

In the mean time provisions became scarce; the addition of four guests of healthy appetite had exhausted the flour provided by Ramarla for Mr. Sinclair's year's consumption; and for ten days they had not ventured out of the cave to procure any supplies of food. Now the attempt was inevitable, and it was a question who should be selected for the adventure, and whither they should turn. During the whole of the ten days none of the prahus had been seen to go out to sea; but several of the pirates had been observed on the cliffs and busy on the shore, as if making out traces on the sand, though none had approached near the cave. Still it was perilous to venture where, at any moment, they might be seen and pursued, when the discovery of the cave would be almost certain, and the lives of the adventurers, with the secret of their retreat, must be sacrificed.

Finally, it was agreed that Tom and Frank should form the "forlorn hope." Each, from Mr. Sinclair's armoury, was supplied with a gun, to be used only in self-defence; each had a sharp spear; and Frank, who was experienced in archery, had a bow and arrows; for it was expressly forbidden them to rouse the echoes in the rocks by using their fire-arms against game. The beach was too open, and too much haunted by their enemies to be safe; fishing was out of the question; and it was determined that there was the least danger of observation in the woods, which were spread in every direction from the caves, and which would likewise afford concealment, if danger threatened them.

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CHAPTER X.

A Foraging Expedition—Unknown Fruits—The Battle of the Wild Hogs—Formidable Enemies—Once more in the cave—The Game-bags—Babyroussa—Madagascar Bat—The Green Pigeon—The Mango—The irksome Imprisonment—A Ship in sight.

THE morning after they had arranged their plans, they were rejoiced to see five of the prahus sail off towards the north, and Mr. Sinclair was of opinion that they might set out fearlessly, for the rest of the boats would be manned, and ready to reinforce the first fleet, if they should fall in with a vessel; and certainly none of the pirates were likely to be prowling about inland. Under such favourable circumstances, the two foragers left the cave, Mike undertaking to keep a watch near the entrance, lest any sudden alarm should cause them to return and need admittance in haste.

"What a blessed thing it is to have light and air, Tom," said Frank, as they went on towards the woods. "No wonder those poor people of Mr. Sinclair's pined and died in yon cave. It is very little better than a prison."

"There are worse berths nor yon, in the hold of a crowded slaver," answered Tom. "And, for that matter, our little dark cabin in the *Amelia* was not a deal better, if we'd not had water under us instead of dry land; for you see, Mr. Frank, to my mind, men never can have a right free feeling when there's not the broad sea rolling round them. I'd take badly now to be rated in a brick house for life, if the cabins were ever so snug. What think you, now? But we must mind orders. Just take a sight of this here tree; would you reckon them things hanging on it to be fit to eat?" He pointed out a large spreading tree, with

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pointed leaves, somewhat like those of the walnut, and of such thick foliage that Frank suggested that an army might be concealed among the branches, which were laden with large fruit, of an oval form, and coloured like the peach.

"It's very stupid of me not to know the tree, or the fruit," said Frank. "Walter would have told us the name and the nature at once, from reading and remarking the pictures of trees and plants; but the truth is, Tom, he is a clever little fellow, and I am a great dunce. We will describe the tree to him, and fill a bag with the fruit as we return; mind we remember the spot. Now, we will make a plunge into the wood, and try to pick up something useful that we do know."

Onward they went among lofty forest trees, of new and curious variety, among which were palms, while hundreds of fruit-trees offered their produce, with the nature of which the two men were quite unacquainted. Frank held down his head quite ashamed, and murmured over his mis-spent idle hours. "Walter must come next time, Tom," said he. "Such a useless fellow as I am ought to stay at home to sew and bake bread."

A rustling among the bushes and a grunting sound called the men to be on their guard; and hiding themselves among the thick underwood, they remained quite still till they perceived, bursting through the crackling bushes at a short distance from them, a huge wild sow, followed by a litter of well-grown grunters, who, with their unwieldy and hideous parent, began to feast on the fallen fruit beneath the trees.

How the hearts of the two hunters panted as they cautiously made ready their weapons. "I will try an arrow at yon outside young one," whispered Frank, "and you must fling your spear at one of those fellows near us. We must carry off some of this fruit-fed pork. Now then! Fire!"

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Twang went the bow, and the arrow pierced a fine animal; Tom's spear, at the same time, wounding another. Never was such a clamour heard among a troop of hogs—shrieking, screaming, yelling, and grunting, the young ones rushed about in wild disorder; the old mother alone had method in her wrath. She turned her vindictive little eye in the direction from which the weapons had come, and charged furiously towards the spot, followed by her progeny. Tom perceived the peril, and ran nimbly up the nearest tree, assisting Frank, who was less agile, to follow him; and the boy narrowly escaped the fierce sow, dropping the bow in his fright, which she seized in her monstrous jaws, and broke it into many pieces with her sharp tusks. Then taking her stand beneath the tree, she grunted a loud defiance as she surveyed her craven foes perched above her, and butting the trunk of the tree violently with her tusks, she seemed determined to besiege them so closely, that escape would be a miracle.

"What a curious tree we have chosen for our valiant retreat, Tom," said Frank; "if the wild hog was not so heavy and clumsy I should feel afraid that she might follow us—it would not be very difficult. It appears to have a dozen trunks, none so hard to climb as that which we selected, and where I was so awkward and unlucky as to lose Mr. Sinclair's excellent bow."

"Ay, ay," answered Tom, "that comes of being a land-lubber. There's not a tree we've seen but a reg'lar sailor could run up like a monkey; but that you can't help—it's all training; and we're safe enough hereaways, anyhow, from yon lumbering craft; but I've seen panthers, and that sort of cattle as would be after us sharp and straight."

"It's all arched, just like a church, beneath," said Frank, "and the different stems meet in this large spreading tree, where we are perched, and where, it seems, we shall have to stay, for that old virago will

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not give way an inch ; and we are likely enough to be starved out, for these little red figs do not look tempting, though the hogs eat them, and the birds seem to be feasting gloriously on them. What a chattering they make ; and even they keep their ground, and seem to defy us, and consider us as intruders. What pretty creatures they are ! they look like green pigeons ; but we want Walter again to give them a name. Could we take some to carry off with us, Tom ?"

"I wish we could carry ourselves off quietly," answered Tom ; "we shall have meat enough if we can get hold of our prizes ; but that chattering old body seems to have no manner of objection to eating them up, though they are her own flesh and blood. See how she is snuffing over them."

But Tom contrived to knock down and kill one of the pigeons, when the mate commenced such a murmuring, melancholy wail, much more musical than the usual cooing, that Frank was quite grieved that they had been so cruel as to widow the gentle bird.

"It will be something to carry home, however, to please Walter," said he ; "rather more attractive in appearance than those ugly, stupid hogs, with their backs woolly like black sheep. And what long legs they have, Tom—much longer than those of our domestic swine ; no doubt they can run very swiftly."

"We's have to try their speed, Mr. Frank," replied Tom, "or else to give them battle. It's a spooney trick of two strong fellows like us to be feared of a grunter. We must never tell Master Watty as how we ran away and got ourselves hid in a tree."

"But then, Tom," said Frank, "if we kill the mother, what will become of all the young ones ?"

"That's true, master," answered he ; "they're a large lot, and that's no mistake ; but we can pickle 'em—the old governor has some salt."

"Surely, Tom," said Frank, in horror, "you never meant to kill them all."

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"Just as you like, master," answered he; "but we could hardly bring them into port alive, and it would be a pity to lose so much good meat."

"Tom, what a hard fellow you are!" said Frank. "Well, let's go down, anyhow—we'll try to make off in whole skins; but we will have our game."

With their spears ready for action they descended suddenly into the midst of the noisy crew; and when the enraged sow rushed upon them, they at first warded off her attacks; but, finding her resolute on warfare, they attacked in turn, and wounded her in several places, retreating at the same time as well as they could, though greatly impeded by the young hogs, who ran round and round them in frantic alarm, intercepting their steps. Still they resolved not to leave behind them the prize for which they had fought, and they struggled through the crowd of animals to take up their booty. Each hoisted one of the slain hogs on his back with one hand, whilst with the other he defended himself against the frantic, bleeding mother, when, unfortunately, one of the stupid young ones crossed Frank's path, and overthrew him. The sow fell upon him with her sharp tusks, tore his jacket from his back, and would have proceeded to inflict serious injury on the boy, had not Tom, throwing down his burthen, and drawing his long knife, advanced to the rescue. He stabbed the beast to the heart, and it fell over quite dead.

Frank rose from the ground bruised, vexed, and still somewhat alarmed, but fortunately unwounded. They resumed their burthens, leaving the sow, which it was hopeless to attempt carrying off; nor did they feel much inclination for the coarse flesh. The young ones now surrounded their dead mother, uttering the most piteous screams; and the young men gladly made good their retreat with their booty, and proceeded homeward, filling their bags as they went on with the various fruits, to which they were unable to give a

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name. Evening had come on by the time they had reached the outskirts of the forest; but they delayed a moment to look at the spreading, fruit-laden tree which had attracted them in the morning, and to gather some of the fruit, when suddenly they were electrified by the sound of voices close at hand.

There was no time for deliberation or consultation. With one impulse they sprung into the tree, and in a moment, hogs and all were safe in the midst of the dense foliage; from which they disturbed and put to flight a multitude of winged inhabitants, which rose with deafening scream from the boughs, just as four desperate-looking men, armed with muskets and spears, with creeses glittering in their belts, appeared below.

They were conversing in a language which Tom recognized to be the Malay, but which he could not, however, understand; and they appeared to be curious about the cause of the alarm which had dispersed the inhabitants of the tree beneath which they stopped, and pointed upwards. Then one of the men fired his musket, fortunately over the heads of the hidden men; and a huge creature fell to the ground, which they kicked away with their feet, and passed on, laughing, into the mazes of the wood, leaving Tom and Frank very thankful for their escape; but still in great anxiety, lest the men should return, and unwilling hastily to leave the shelter of the tree.

"Yet I really should not like to remain here all night," said Frank, "amongst such huge hideous animals as those that we put to flight. Did you remark them, Tom; they were certainly not birds?"

"One thing is clear, my boy," answered Tom, "they had no feathers, I'll swear; and I question whether they was God's creatures at all. It's my opinion they were something far worse. God preserve us! No, Mr. Frank, pirates is rogues, but they're men like ourselves, and we'd better come to quarters

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boldly with such as them, than make our berths along with bad spirits like these here. I'm not fond of staying here; so come on, my lad, while it's light enough for our folks to see us."

On the ground lay the strange animal which the pirates had shot, and which Frank saw was one of the "bad spirits" that had alarmed Tom; but as he was certainly of opinion that the monster was really an inhabitant of earth, he picked it up, contrary to the wishes of his friend, to take home. Then having added a quantity of the peach-like fruit of the tree that had sheltered them, to their load, they hastened to the mouth of the cave, where they were not suffered long to wait. They had been seen at some distance by the vigilant Mike; the ladder was lowered in readiness for them; and they gladly found themselves safely enclosed in the cave which they had been so glad to quit in the morning.

"We have been greatly alarmed for you," said Mr. Sinclair. "You had unluckily dropped an arrow not far from the cave as you went, and we have seen four piratical-looking men pass, who picked up the arrow, and examined it with great attention, plainly showing that they suspected the owner could not be far distant; for it did not look like one of their own arrows."

"Not a bit of it," said Tom. "I defy any rogue among them to rig out an arrow like that. Pity you lost one, Master Frank; they were a taut ship-shaped lot. I barbed them all myself with some fish-hooks of Master Wally's, that I beat out. It's a bad job."

"It is, indeed unfortunate," said Mr. Sinclair; "for it will doubtless excite suspicions in these men, difficult to quell. They seemed to trace your steps into the woods, greatly to our alarm, which was augmented by hearing the sound of a gun. Tell us, my friends, how you escaped these wretches."

"First, sir," said Frank, "let us unship our cargo.

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There, Mike, we have brought you pork enough for a month." And Mike rubbed his hands exultingly, as he surveyed the two woolly hogs.

"And sure, Master Walter," said he, "isn't it a strange breed of grunters the people kape here. Wouldn't it be a cow, or maybe a calf, that owns them legs; and they having as much wool on their backs as would spin a frieze trusty? And where will be the poor man what owns the bastes, Master Frank?"

"They are wild animals, Mike," said Walter, "and they belong to any one who can take them. Are they not the *Babyroussa,* Mr. Sinclair?"

"They are, my dear boy," answered he; "easily recognized by the long, slender curved upper tusks, as curiousin form, as inexplicable in use; but God arranges everything created for some special purpose; and it is presumption in blind man to decry the thing he cannot understand. This animal is common in most of the islands of this sea, the flesh is excellent, and the tusks valuable as ivory."

"Now look at this fellow, Wally," said Frank, producing the creature shot by the pirates.

"How hideous!" exclaimed Walter. "I have never seen any representation of it, unless it be the vampyre bat."

"It is a bat peculiar to the larger islands of the Indian Ocean," said Mr. Sinclair, "named the flying-fox, the raussette, the Madagascar or the Java bat. It is one of a race of animals distinguished by the fingers of the fore paws being drawn out and developed into wings by a connecting membrane. This is the giant of the family; the wings usually spread to four or five feet, though the body is not more than one foot in length. It is truly one of the monsters of the natural world; it resembles in form the vampyre described by ancient authors. And doubtless, the first sight of this extraordinary animal may have given the idea of some of the horrible fancies of superstition.

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I am glad, my children, that you have had the opportunity of examining it."

After the hunters had eaten the refreshment they so much needed, Frank told the adventures of the pigs and the pirates, and produced the lovely pigeon, much to the admiration of Walter.

"It is the *Aromatic vinago*," said Mr. Sinclair, "or, as you name it, the green pigeon, so called from the predominance of green in its bright-coloured plumage. You perceive the short legs are feathered, and the feet formed for perching. It feeds on the small red figs, and its plumage so much resembles the foliage of the fig-tree, that it is difficult to discover it."

"It was there we got it," said Frank; "and now we must show our specimens of fruit. Please to tell us the names, and if they are good to eat, Mr. Sinclair. Tom and I, great dunces as we are, though hungry and thirsty, were famished amidst plenty, because we did not know what was safe to eat. We must have a lesson before we venture out again."

"You have, indeed, been in the midst of plenty," replied Mr. Sinclair. "This delicate peach-coloured fruit, which you would gather from the tree of the bats, is the mango, one of the most delicious of our fruits; the smell, the flavour, and the melting nature of the pulp resemble the peach, and, like that fruit, it has also a large stone. You must have met with descriptions of the mango-tree and its fruit, even in your books of amusement, Frank; and, if you had been commonly attentive, you would have recognized it, and might have enjoyed the pleasant fruit. All these, the banana, the fig, and the plantain, are wholesome and refreshing. We can at least make a feast now; for, in this climate, we cannot preserve the delicate fruits long."

"We can easily get a fresh supply, sir," said Frank. "The mango-tree is not very far from our door."

"Not on any account," answered Mr. Sinclair. "At

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least, not at present. We must wait till we think the suspicions of our dangerous neighbours are hushed. I grieve at the necessity of keeping you, who are young and active, shut up; but we must submit, for detection would be inevitable destruction. We have now replenished our stores, and, for some time, shall be in no danger of famine; and we must try to find some mode of profitably employing our time."

Mr. Sinclair had already taught his guests several words and phrases of the Malay language, which, with slight variations of dialect, is the common language of most of the islands of the Indian Ocean; and he now commenced a regular course of instruction, especially to the two young boys, from the books which he possessed—amongst which was the New Testament in the Malay tongue,—a book now prohibited by the persecuting government, but still ardently coveted by the secret Christians, to whom he hoped, if he succeeded in reaching the Mauritius, to have the opportunity of sending more copies. The boys amused themselves by endeavouring to translate some of their own books into Malay, and thus their confinement was rendered less heavy.

Once again, during the following week, they saw men pass, and heard voices in the wood, but no suspicion seemed to be attached to the bush-covered rocks which enclosed the anxious watchers. But the pirates were still near enough to it to be overheard; and even the boys, who were mere pupils in the language, understood the wrathful words dropped by the disappointed men, who threatened destruction on the lurking spies who had been sent by Government to discover their forts, and that they would lead the forces to destroy them.

"They have not the faces of our people," said one of the men, who had probably been of the party surprised by Tom and Mike in their unlucky expedition.

"They will be some of the meddling, pale Christians," answered another, "that have intruded into our country, and want to make slaves of us all."

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Mr. Sinclair sighed, as he observed, "How little do these deluded men know that it is the truth alone that can make them free."

Another week passed, and the pork was all consumed; the bread, too, was failing, and the young prisoners pined for the fresh air.

"Mr. Sinclair," said Frank, one day, "I have counted ten prahus go out; that is the whole of the piratical fleet. We might now safely make a trip to the woods."

"They'll be after some prize, the black rogues!" said Tom, looking earnestly after the prahus. "If we had but a bit of a boat, we might have launched her, and helped to lick the sea-robbers. Where's your glass, Master Walter? Can you make out a sail? I'd like to know what craft they were after."

Walter could not make out a sail; but Tom, more used to look out, soon discovered a dark speck in the distant south, which, he doubted not, the pirates had also marked, and were out to examine; and, if it were worth while, to attack it. But the prahus still continued to tack, and lay off the coast, to allow the vessel to come up, that they might scrutinize her without danger; and, as it gradually came near enough to be seen, the watchers from the cave perceived with regret that it had the appearance of a small unarmed merchant-vessel. Mr. Sinclair judged, from the appearance and the rigging, that it was one of the traders from the Mauritius; but he could not conceive why it was passing this coast. These traders sometimes put in at the great ports on both sides of the island; but no vessel from the Mauritius to India would sail round through the Mozambique Channel.

The greatest interest and curiosity were excited; even the foraging party was forgotten. No one could think of anything but the doomed ship, which did not seem to have noticed the treacherous fleet that had now drawn up into a little creek, and lay concealed by a jutting rock.

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CHAPTER XI.

The Attack of the Pirates—The Sack of the Vessel—The swamped Boat—A Man saved—Domestic Surgery—The Nobleman Ramarla—The frustrated Plan of Flight—A Litter in requisition—A nocturnal Expedition—The haunted Mango-tree.

A FEW minutes more brought the vessel so near that the anxious watchers could distinguish figures on deck. It actually seemed to be making to the shore. At length, Mr. Sinclair, who held the glass, saw a boat lowered; two rowers entered, and then a tall man descended, at the sight of whom Mr. Sinclair started and trembled.

"What do I see!" he cried. "Too surely it is he! my noble, my generous protector, Ramarla! Now I know why the vessel is here. It is for my sake he has brought it round to this demon-haunted coast.—It was to carry me off that he has ventured into the jaws of destruction. Alas! alas! is my cup of misery still unfilled? My friend! my benefactor! let us pray for him, my children, for we cannot aid him."

"Not a bit of it," replied Tom. "That comes of being fast bound here on land. If we'd only been afloat, we might have lent a hand to save him; but landsmen are just shut up in a great prison;" and Tom walked about his smaller prison in great grief and indignation.

No one could utter more words; their sole attention was directed towards the unconscious vessel, and the terrible sight of the prahus, which now emerged from the creek, and flying over the waves, soon surrounded the hapless ship. It carried no guns, and though a few musket-shots were fired, they were ineffectually opposed to the showers of spears, and the answering

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shots of the pirates. The contest was very brief—the ship was soon boarded—and a short struggle took place on deck. Soon all contention seemed over; several bodies were cast overboard, living or dead; and then the work of plunder commenced. Large packages were lowered into the prahus, and each, as it was laden, made to the pirates' cave, which lay considerably north of the caves.

In the meantime the little boat, which almost seemed to have escape the notice of the pirates, rowed rapidly towards the reefs; and the agitated Mr. Sinclair began to indulge a hope that his friend might succeed in landing. The prayers which were uttered for his safety were audible, and anxiety shone on every countenance. Already the ladder was in the hands of the men, to be lowered the moment Mr. Sinclair gave the word, when the second prahu, laden with plunder, instead of following the first to the north, made towards the shore, evidently in pursuit of the boat, which, however, it failed to reach, until it had wound among the reefs through the narrow openings, where no prahu could follow it. The disappointed pirates discharged a volley of shots after it, and the watchers saw with horror all the three men fall. The prahu then proceeded northward to the cove, leaving the devoted boat drifting about, and dashing against the rocks, where it speedily disappeared, swamped, or broken up by the sharp reefs.

Mr. Sinclair kneeled down in an agony of grief; the two young boys wept aloud; and the two sailors, though accustomed to scenes of sudden death, seemed deeply affected, but manifested their feelings chiefly by execrations against the sharks of pirates, who had so wantonly destroyed the boat.

It was astonishing to see how rapidly and dexterously the ship was sacked, though probably nothing that could be of the least value to the pirates was left on board. Finally they set it on fire, and as the last

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prahu sailed out of sight with its freight, the unfortunate vessel was blazing up, a trophy of their victory. Whether any living beings were left in it, or whether they were murdered, or carried off as slaves, it was impossible to discover.

"Let's make a trip to the shore, Mike," said Tom; "if that there boat were only capsized, she may drift ashore, and we could put her to some use."

"Ay, ay," answered Mike, "and sure mightn't we mate some of the dead corpses washed ashore, and waitin' for us to give them Christian burial."

"I cannot oppose your intention, my good men," said Mr. Sinclair; "it is an errand of duty and kindness. Let us not leave the unburied dead to the vultures and cormorants. But, I entreat you, be wary; let no more lives be sacrificed. Neither can I allow these boys of tender years to share your danger."

"We're better without them, master," replied Tom. "We'll hang out a signal if we need more hands. Here, youngster, hand us over one of your white handkerchiefs."

They took the handkerchief, but refused to carry a gun, which, indeed, would have availed them little if the pirates had returned; and armed only with long spears, which they thought might be useful to them in recovering the bodies, the two men set out to the beach, rejecting the use of the ladder, which their nautical habits rendered unnecessary. And now every eye was directed to their movements; only Mr. Sinclair no longer could bear to look out on the fatal scene, so deeply did he feel the shock of the loss of his beloved friend, and he continued in silent prayer apart from the boys. Walter held the glass, and reported the proceedings of the sailors.

"They have caught sight of something, Frank," said he. "What can it be? perhaps the boat! No, now I see it; it is something smaller, it looks but a

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speck, something lying on a dry reef. Now, Tom is going to swim out to it! Oh, Frank! if he should meet a shark! What a brave fellow he is! How he buffets through those narrow channels! Now he is resting on a rock—now off he plunges again! He has got to the place—he is leaning over that black thing. Now he is hailing Mike, who is off after him. What can they be about? They are together upon the reef; they are lifting up—what is it? it looks like a dead body! but they are very careful! Oh, Frank! if it should be a living man!"

"What nonsense, Wally!" answered he. "How could a man be living, who has been all this time in the water? Let me have a peep."

He looked earnestly for a minute, and then exclaimed, "By Jupiter, I do believe it is some poor fellow they want to save! I say, Mr. Sinclair, you must let Wally and me run down; we may do some good. Hand out the brandy, my boy! If we had but a boat or a raft! Take the railway rug—it may be useful—and give me those ropes. Keep up your spirits, sir; things may not be so bad. Now, Wally, shoot out the ladder, and away we go."

The boys were not long in reaching the shore, and they now plainly saw the reef on which the two men stood, and which the rapidly ebbing tide had left uncovered so far as to render it sufficiently commodious for them to assist the person they were supporting, but whom the boys judged to be quite insensible, if not dead. From the midst of a heap of wreck Frank drew out two oars, and said, "I think, by the help of these, we might almost get up to them without swimming. We are both pretty well used to leaping, and might easily spring across some of these channels, and, at the worst, it would only be a plunge now and then. After all, perhaps you had better stay here; you're hardly up to the thing. Nothing hurts me, you know; so put the bottle into this pocket. I hope I shall not

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get a fall and break it. Now, my oar; the rug I'll leave behind with you."

Walter would gladly have risked the attempt, but Frank, who generally had his own way, decided against it, and set out alone. He sprang across to the first rock, and wading, plunging, leaping, and even being compelled once or twice to swim a short distance, he reached at length the broad dry rock, where the two sailors were kneeling and supporting a man dressed in the long flowing costume of the inhabitants of the country. The white *lamba*, or scarf-like robe, with a rich embroidered border, and the handsome silk cloak, with the ornaments of gold which he wore, announced him to be of noble birth. The rest of his dress was of European fashion. From a wound in his shoulder the blood was oozing, and his pale, immovable countenance was that of a corpse.

"But he's not dead, Mr. Frank," said Tom. "He's warm, and I can feel a little beating of the heart. We ought to help him, as long as there's a chance."

Frank produced the bottle of brandy, happily uninjured; they rubbed his limbs, and tried to introduce a little into his mouth. For a long time their efforts were fruitless; at length, the blood from the wound flowed more freely; he gasped several times, opened his eyes, looked round wildly, and swallowed, almost unconsciously, the brandy given to him. This seemed to revive him; he murmured some words in a faint voice, which Frank, who now understood a little of the language, fancied were an inquiry after his crew, and an entreaty not to be made a slave. He tried to answer in the few words he could remember that they were not pirates, but friends; "Christian friends," he added; for he now felt assured that this rescued stranger must be the powerful noble who protected Mr. Sinclair.

The eye of the grateful man glistened, as he faintly said, "Good! good! His name be praised!" and then

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was silent; for the blood now flowed profusely from the wound, and he fainted from weakness. Tom had already torn up Walter's signal handkerchief into bandages and lint, and he now bound up the wound very neatly. A little more brandy brought the man round, and they then began to consider how they could convey him to shore before the tide turned, or, what would be still more unfortunate, any of the pirates should revisit the scene of disaster. As soon as Frank named the railway rug, Mike set out to the beach to bring it up, and he brought at the same time the ropes and the other oar which Frank had found. With these materials Tom, as he expressed it, rigged up a sort of hammock, suspended on the two oars, on which they placed the wounded man, who was, they now perceived, wholly unable to stand, as one of his legs was injured by a violent blow against the reefs.

This hammock or litter was carried on the shoulders of the two strong sailors, Frank following close to aid them in the most difficult channels. By this means, with great labour, and such jolting as extorted groans of agony from the unfortunate sufferer, they finally landed on the beach, all completely exhausted; and after a few minutes of rest, they resumed their journey, of which the most difficult part, the ascent of the cliff, remained yet to be accomplished.

"Wait, you two lads, here below with the poor fellow," said Tom, after some discussion. "Mike and I will go aloft and rig out a whip with posts and ropes, and lower it over the cliff. Then you belay the ropes to the corners of this here jury hammock, and we'll hoist him up smart and taut."

The undertaking was certainly perilous; but it was the only plan they could think of, and the two active sailors were soon above the almost perpendicular cliffs. At the first terrace or shelf they fixed two stumps of oars firmly in crevices of the rock, attached four strong ropes to them, and cast the ends down, which the boys

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tied securely to the corners of the rug. By this time Mr. Sinclair had been roused from his deep dejection to observe with interest the occupation of the brave men; and, ashamed of his inaction, he went down to join the sailors, whose startling story he could scarcely credit, or even comprehend. He brought with him the ladder, which they lowered close to the ropes, and thus Frank was able to guide the hammock, and protect it from the sharp corners of the rock, while the strong sailors above, aided by Mr. Sinclair, drew up the ropes slowly, securing them round the posts at every foot they made; a prodigious effort, unassisted by mechanical means. At length, with a triumph which broke out in an involuntary cheering, the hammock was landed on the terrace, and Mr. Sinclair with delight, mingled with regret for his condition, welcomed his esteemed friend.

The next stage was accomplished with more confidence and ease, and after a very short rest on the summit, they thought it prudent to hasten to the cave, to make all sure, in case of the return of the pirates. To hoist the helpless Ramarla to the cave was an undertaking of less difficulty and peril than the ascent of the cliffs, and he was soon placed on a bed of soft grass in the airy, light cave which was their usual dwelling-place.

Then Mr. Sinclair examined the injuries his unfortunate guest had sustained. The wound in his shoulder, though very painful, he trusted was not severe; but the injury to the leg was of a more important nature, for besides extensive laceration, the bone was broken. Fortunately, Mr. Sinclair had, before he left England, acquired some knowledge of surgery and medicine, in hopes of rendering himself more useful in this but half-civilized country. He had a small stock of medicaments with him; and the practice he had previously had among his father's little flock of Christians, had given him experience and confidence. He succeeded

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in replacing the bone, and dressing the lacerations, and then placed the leg in a cradle of bark, which the men stripped from a tree near the cave.

After these operations, Mr. Sinclair made his patient swallow an opiate, and he sank into a quiet sleep, which all hoped would be beneficial to him.

"Is there any hope of more being saved?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"Not a bit of chance of that," said Tom. "You see, sir, this is how it had been. When *she* swamped, he'd been cast at once on the nearly dry reef, with his face uppermost, and he'd never been fairly under water. The other fellows had gone down with her."

"Ay, ay; that's my thought," said Mike, "and wouldn't they be shot dead before they were drowned; and sorra a bit of chance they'd have to swim ashore, by rason of that same."

"A very strong reason too, Mike," said Frank, "and I've no doubt you are right, for all fell when the volley was fired. But we must keep a look-out for the boat, Tom; it may come ashore yet."

"It would be of no use, Frank," said Walter; "for it would not be very safe for us again to venture to sea in a small boat."

"Safe! no, indeed, it's not very safe," answered Frank; "and it's not very safe to go roaming about these roads among a horde of pirates; but what then? we're in for it, and no mistake, my boy; but won't it all come out finely in our voyages and adventures?"

"How little we thought of all this, Frank!" said Walter; "and poor dear papa will have heard of our foolish frolic by this time, and will believe we are lost. I don't deserve ever to see him again."

"Keep up, my lad," said Tom; "we'll get afloat somehow, and cheat yon murdering rogues yet. But it will have to be from some far-away port; they have their eyes on us here, there's no chance of making sail in their very faces."

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It was some time before Ramarla awoke: he was then quite collected, and able to speak; and took some tea and eggs—the only refreshment they had to offer him; but Frank and Walter determined, as soon as it was dark, to go out to the mango-tree, which they were certain they could find in the dimmest light, to procure some fruit for their sick guest, who was now able to give some account of his unfortunate adventure.

"I was on my way," said he, "to rescue you, my excellent friend, from your dismal and lonely state of existence, ignorant that God had mercifully interfered, and sent you companions. I had myself fallen under such serious suspicions, that our friend the prince secretly informed me he could no longer protect me from the vengeance of the government. I had some time ago consigned to an upright merchant at the Mauritius gold and jewels of very great value, anticipating this event; and thither I proposed to flee, before the 'spear of justice,' placed before my door, should forbid my retreat.

"I therefore agreed with the master of the small trader which you saw, to embark me, with much valuable property, at a small retired port on the west coast, and to put in here to take you up. The master was a Christian; and I knew I might trust him with myself and my property; but I still wished to preserve the secret of these caverns. I therefore determined to put out the boat, and come for you myself. I knew that at this season you would expect my visit daily, though certainly not by sea, and that you would be on the watch.

"I left the vessel, and was so absorbed in speculations on the future, that I was unmindful of outward things, till a cry from the rowers directed my attention to the pirate fleet. All hopes of saving the ship were, I saw, vain; and I urged the men to make vigorously for the shore, where I promised to place them in safety. At one time I hoped that in the thirst for plunder,

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our little bark might escape their notice; but the demoniac spirit of the wretches prompted them to turn aside to commit wanton and deliberate murder. My two companions lay dead by my side, and I believed that I had received my death-wound, when, with a sudden shock, the boat struck, and I lost all consciousness till I recovered to find myself in the kind hands of my true and faithful brothers in Christ."

Though Ramarla was tolerably well acquainted with English, he had repeated his story in the Malagasy language; but from his weakness he spoke so slowly that the boys understood his words, and Walter could not help weeping at the misfortunes of the generous, unselfish, true Christian, as he said to Mr. Sinclair,—

"Do tell me, sir, what is the spear of justice which could prevent the escape of this gentleman."

"It is," answered Mr. Sinclair, "a large silver-headed spear, the emblem of the power of justice, at the very sight of which all the people bow. The Malagasy name signifies 'The Hater of Lies;' and when this spear is placed before the door of a person accused of crime, he dare not leave the house."

"Who are you, my boy," said Ramarla, in English, "who feel so much interested in my misfortunes?"

"When I look on you, sir," answered Walter, "I cannot help thinking on my own dear father, who will now also be in very great sorrow, and it is I who have caused all this sorrow."

Mr. Sinclair told his friend the story of the two boys, their desolate condition and extreme danger, which had induced him to admit them and their companions into his sanctuary, though he had thus violated the pledge of secrecy he had given to Ramarla.

"Not so, my friend," answered Ramarla. "This retreat is ever open to the faithful and persecuted Christian. Certainly, these companions will render your escape more difficult and hazardous; but it is advisable you should continue together For me, even

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if God spare my life, I see no prospect of removal from this cell. Here I must live and die."

"God forbid that we should be so base as to abandon you," said Mr. Sinclair, "who have been the saviour and protector of so many distressed Christians. Your accident may occasion us a little delay; but I trust it will not prevent us all escaping together. We may see some vessel near enough to induce us to signal to it and obtain assistance."

"No, Sinclair," answered his friend, "my late attempt has convinced me of the futility of such an expectation. No large India vessels pass the Channel now, and smaller vessels, if they came in sight, would certainly be attacked, and probably be destroyed by the pirates. Our only hope of escape is, to cross the island to the east coast, where, from some of the small bays, with which I am well acquainted, we may either take a small boat, or catch some vessel bound to the Mauritius. But to travel on foot two hundred miles, and to cross the mountains, will be a task even for these young men—for me, an impossibility."

"There is a litter with poles in one of the caves," said Frank; "we could very well carry the gentleman."

"An excellent idea," replied Mr. Sinclair. "We still have the litters which were used to bring the young and feeble to this retreat. They may need some repair, but are still in fair condition; we can relieve each other as bearers, and shall manage very well; but first we must have you in a state of convalescence."

Ramarla shook his head, but said no more on the subject then; and they all pursued their usual occupations, not daring to leave the cave during the day. But when the darkness came on, the two boys, taking a large basket, and spears to beat down the fruit, set out to the mango-tree, which they had no difficulty in finding. Not succeeding well in beating the tree,

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Frank climbed it, chasing out the horrible bats by hundreds, though disgusted with the fox-like smell from their hairy skins. These frightful creatures startled Walter, who was below; but his alarm was much greater when some animal dropped from the tree upon his back, and clasped him round the neck. He put up his hand to extricate himself and found his fingers sharply bitten. In great terror he cried out to Frank, who descended in haste, followed by a host of active cat-like animals, springing from the branches like monkeys, and displaying, even in the dim light of a young moon, rows of sharp long teeth, while they uttered incessantly hoarse angry cries.

Frank soon released Walter from his unpleasant assailant, which he bound with a cord to carry away; and not choosing to remain any longer among these spiteful spectral-looking creatures, they collected as much fallen fruit as filled their basket; and leading off their noisy captive, which, though not larger than a good-sized cat, made a desperate resistance, they soon made their way home.

CHAPTER XII.

The Macaco—Another foraging Party—Mike's valuable Discovery—A Sight of fresh Meat—A fierce Conflict—Mike in Jeopardy—The Booty—The last Days in the Cave—The Beginning of the Pilgrimage.

RAMARLA was truly grateful for the delicious ripe fruit, which Mr. Sinclair assured the boys was the most salutary medicine that could have been procured for him. He then turned to their prisoner, and told them it was one of a species of *lemur*, a numerous variety of which inhabited Madagascar. These were generally

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known as *macacos*, or Madagascar cats; the body rather resembling that of the cat, though the long, soft, woolly tail was more like that of the squirrel. The name *lemur*, or *lêmures*, was given them from their peculiar hobgoblin appearance and nocturnal habits.

"This animal," continued Mr. Sinclair, belongs to a species more than the rest ghost-like, from the white ruff that surrounds its dark face, its fiery eyes, and its flitting, noiseless movements. It is named the *ruffed lemur;* and savage as it naturally is, may be rendered quite as tame as the domestic cat."

"I shall certainly try to tame it," said Walter. "But I wonder why we did not see it when we were in the tree before."

"That was not likely," said Mr. Sinclair; "for, during the day it sleeps, enveloped in its long tail; and, like other hobgoblins, only appears at night. Now, my friends, to prayers and rest, for to-morrow some of you brave men must make a sortie, our provisions being quite exhausted."

Next morning it was agreed that the foraging party should consist of Frank and the two sailors. Walter was disappointed; but consoled himself with teaching his macaco, and with reading and talking with Ramarla, Mr. Sinclair acting as surgeon, nurse, cook, and watchman. He supplied the foragers once more with bows and arrows, long spears, and game-bags, and they departed, taking this time a direction towards the south. They first crossed a rich marshy region, where the wild rice grew luxuriantly, and from thence entered the woods, proposing to fill a bag with rice as they returned. In the woods they again met with the mango, the plantain, and several of the palm tribe, and it was no difficulty for the sailors to run up the bare trunk of the cocoa-nut palm, and throw down fruit, not only for their own refreshment, but to carry back to the cave.

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"We find abundance of fruit," said Frank; "but I really wish, Tom, we could meet with something more substantial."

"And what is it ye'd be wanting, Mr. Frank," cried Mike, running up to them in great glee. "Isn't it thrue altogether that it's the pratee itself, and niver nothin but that same, that God has sint all the way from ould Ireland itself, that we may be atin' like Christians in this same forrin part?"

"Are you sure of it, Mike?" asked Frank. "What do you say, Tom? for I am ashamed to say I don't know the plant. I thought the potato had a white flower, and this is green."

"It all comes to the same thing," answered Mike, "seeing we don't want to ate the flowers at all, but only the finest fruit of the world; and didn't I smell out that same and dig up the jewels. See here, Mr. Frank." And Mike produced a tuber which certainly resembled the potato sufficiently to gladden the heart of an Irishman.

"We calls them there things *yams*, aboard ship," said Tom; "and they're not bad eating, specially when the crew is on half-rations. Ay, ay,—fill your bag, Mike. But 'tatoes, and rice, and plums, is poor feeding for able hands. We must head east a bit now, I reckon, Mr. Frank."

They did head east; and found the woods lively enough with small birds. Their arrows brought down a dozen pigeons, which they gladly bagged—and Mike, being now satisfied with his pratees, as he persisted in calling the yams—and Frank thinking the pigeons a handsome prize, it was only Tom who continued to grumble.

"It will never do, I tell ye, Mr. Frank," said he. "We have a long trip afore us, set, as far as I can learn, with rocks and shoals, and no chart to run by. Now, it stands to reason as how we should keep up the hands strong. And what's a few pigeons, or a

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dish of watery yams? Not a bit of salt junk · not a drop of grog; not even a mouldy biscuit to cheat time at the watch. Depend on it we shall founder before we come into port."

"I hope not, Tom," said Frank. "You know we don't need so much animal food in these hot climates."

"I question that, my boy," replied he. "I know as how I need it, for one. I'll not say as how I could mount to the top-gallant cross-trees myself just now, after living a month on such swash."

"Barrin that illigant pork, Tom," said Mike; "sure, now, that was man's mate."

"It had no taste," replied Tom, sulkily. "Now a barrel of good salt pork—— Halloo! lay off there snug."

At this command they all plunged into a thicket; Frank feeling rather squeamish, for, of course, he concluded the pirates were in sight.

"Make ready, and then don't move for your lives," whispered Tom; "but just take a squint, my boys."

At the desire of Tom, they did take a squint, as well as they could, through the thick bushes, and saw in a forest glade opening before them, a large herd of fierce-looking, though not very large, cattle.

"Now, look about you," continued Tom, the commander; "we are short-handed to come to quarters again them; but as soon as we have given them a broadside, draw off, and let every man take to his tree till we see how the fellows like it."

It was a moment of great anxiety. They chose separate stands, where each could have space to draw his bow, and a good safe tree close at hand to retreat to. The wild cattle, which were quietly grazing, were not more than thirty or forty yards from them; everything seemed favourable for the attack, except the unskilfulness of the two sailors, who were not accustomed to the use of the bow; and Ramarla had strongly advised them not to bring guns.

They drew the bows at once, and Frank's arrow

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struck one of the beasts, which ran forward and fell; the rest of the herd fled in different directions, and as Tom thought, unhurt. Four of them made directly to the thicket where the men were concealed, who lost no time in climbing to the trees they had selected; for the animals seemed bent on a fierce defence. Unfortunately, Mike, who was a heavy man, had selected a slender tree, and, while perched on one of the branches, looking down on the cattle which were roaring furiously immediately beneath him, the branch broke, and he fell into the midst of them. The beasts all turned upon him, trampling and butting in such an alarming manner, that Tom called on Frank to assist him; and they were down in an instant, attacking and endeavouring to drive off the infuriated cattle with their spears. They succeeded so far as to divert their attack from Mike to themselves, and allow the poor man to rise from the ground and join in the warfare.

The conflict was deadly; the heavy beasts more than once overthrew one of their opponents, who was rescued and dragged away by the other men. At length Tom contrived to draw his long knife, and to wound the most formidable of their antagonists so severely that it fell, and the rest in a panic took to flight. They soon despatched the fallen beast, and then proceeded to look after that which Frank had wounded, and found, that though the poor creature, which was but a calf, had staggered to its legs, it was unable to make off, and they easily finished it; and then, breathing freely, they began to look into their own condition.

"My flesh is so bruised that I am sore from head to foot," said Tom; "but, thank God, I've no bones broken, and I think we may say we are all sound and seaworthy. You've got a rare black eye, Master Frank; but, what matter?—there's nobody here to jeer ye with getting into a row. Poor Mike's had the worst on't."

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"And av my bones were not being iron altogether," said Mike, "where had I been, my darlins? It's all of a jelly I feel myself; and sorra a chance was there left for me av ye'd been waitin a bit longer to look on at the fight. Sure, it's a heavy foot that same baste was having, and a hard head; but, plase God, he'll not be knocking over another, seeing we will have cooled his blood a bit."

"How shall we get the two beasts to the cave, Tom?" said Frank. "It would be a pity to leave one behind."

"Is it laving at all you mane, Master Frank?" asked Mike. "Not a jint will we be sparin. Won't I be shouldering one baste, and you two walking away with the other; and won't we be the boys as will gladden the heart of the ould jintleman yonder, seeing we will be bringing mate to sarve us all till the forrin man will get strong again."

The supply of meat was certainly ample and tempting, yet it was with no very cheerful feeling that the bruised, battered, scratched men contemplated the formidable task of bearing it off. With two stout boughs, torn from a tree, across which they tied two of the spears, they formed a sort of hand-barrow, on which they placed the larger beast; Mike took the calf on his back, the other men lifted their burthen, and they began with speed and caution to retrace their steps, rather fearful of another encounter in their present condition. They were obliged to rest now and then, when they added fruit and rice to their stores, and reached the cave safely, bearing relief and plenty to the anxious watchers.

"Ay, ay!" answered Tom to earnest inquiries, "we'll be glad enough to rest and ease our bones; but we'll need a spell of work first. Come, Mike, man, let's skin and cut up that calf, and then thou can broil a few steaks to start with."

The butchery was all accomplished in a separate cave;

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the steaks were then cooked, and after the weary men had rubbed their bruises and slight wounds with brandy, they were glad to sit down to dinner, and relate their adventures.

"After all" said Mr. Sinclair, one beast would have been amply sufficient for us; we shall not be able to keep the meat long in this hot climate, and it is a sin to waste it."

"Never you fear, sir," said Tom. "If we have to leave port soon, we must lay in provision; and, you see, we can salt part, and part we can *jerkey*, as they call it off Buenos Ayres. They cut it up into ribbons-like, and dry it in the sun."

"It is *charqui*," exclaimed Walter. "I know how to do it—I have read all about it!"

"Ay, ay!" replied Tom—"books is clever; but eye-seeing goes farther. It's odds but I'll manage it better than you, without book-learning."

"It is still better to combine theory and practice," said Mr. Sinclair. "You may receive some useful hints from Walter, Tom; though he would probably be awkward in the work himself."

The next day the men, though still suffering from sore and aching limbs, cut up and salted part of the beef—Mr. Sinclair could not spare salt for the whole;—the rest was cut into strips and dried in the sun, at the open parts of the cave. Some choice pieces were cooked to be eaten immediately, as well as the greatest part of the calf; for the two sailors, returned to meat rations, had most extraordinary appetites; indeed, the whole party partook, with great zest, of roast veal and *pratees*, as Mike called the yams. Even Ramarla had his veal-broth, and was greatly benefited by a change of diet.

The wound of the unfortunate man was not so serious as they had at first dreaded, and was soon healing rapidly. The broken limb went on well; but it was plain that he must for a long time continue the

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recumbent position, and it was especially necessary that he should make his escape from the island before the whole country should be thronged with emissaries to apprehend him. Now that it was no longer necessary to go out for supplies, all hands were employed in repairing the best of the litters, and making other preparations for departure. The stout hide of the large beast was dried and nailed over the roof of the litter, to afford shelter from the sun, as well as from the rains which must inevitably fall in a short time. Curtains of country-made cloth were added, and the poles, which age had decayed, were replaced by others made from some stout oars, cast ashore on the beach. With the skin of the calf Tom repaired the shoes and boots that needed repair; but Frank and Walter possessed still a large stock.

As it was necessary to reduce the baggage as much as possible, for two men would always be required for the litter, the wooden box was left behind; indeed, the greatest part of the contents had been consumed. A little tea and sugar, and the brandy, only were left; these were put into the portmanteau, which was placed at the head of the litter, to serve as a support for Ramarla when he chose to sit up. Kettles, a bucket, cups and other necessary utensils, were also stowed in the litter, and each of the men had on his back a bag for provisions, or a knapsack, and carried a light spear and bow. The guns were slung beneath the litter, and the ammunition was divided amongst them, so that, in case of separation, each should have a supply.

The eve of departure arrived; all was ready; and for the last time a solemn service was held in the church, when special prayers were put up for God's blessing on their hazardous expedition. There was much sorrow mingled with their hope of escape, for they were leaving a perfectly secure shelter, for toil, anxiety, and uncertainty; and Mr. Sinclair shed tears as he turned away from the sepulchre of all those who

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had been dear to him in the days of his youth. At early dawn next morning, they left the friendly cavern; carrying away to some distance the ladder, which they then destroyed and scattered, that no facility might be given for the heathen to desecrate the sanctuary of religion and peace.

Then, in a course as directly east as the entangled woods allowed them to make, they marched forward, silent for some time from anxiety and suppressed emotion, till an hour's toil had carried them about two miles from their retreat; then Walter, who was exempted from being a litter-bearer, and who walked by the side of Ramarla, said at last,

"How many miles do you think we can travel in one day, sir? I want to calculate how long we shall be in getting to the other side of the island."

"On the level ground," answered Ramarla, "these strong men may, if no accident intervenes, accomplish ten or twelve miles a day. In crossing the mountains, I can form no idea of the time it will take; I am not even acquainted with any pass, unless we deviate into the frequented, and therefore dangerous, roads."

"But the pirates?" said Walter, in alarm.

"A few days' regular march," answered Ramarla, "will remove us entirely from the haunts of the pirates, who confine themselves to the coast. But we shall then have other enemies to dread—the spies and officers of a vindictive and unsparing government. I am the especial object of their vengeance, and am, unfortunately, not only helpless myself, but a clog on the steps of my best friends."

Ramarla spoke English in a slow and precise manner, and Mike, who was listening to his words, said, "And wouldn't yer honour handle a gun as nately as any man. Sure it's yer arms we'd be wantin' in a hullaballoo, and not yer legs at all, barrin we had to run for it, and that same's not natteral, anyhow."

As soon as Ramarla was made to comprehend

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Mike's unclassical English, he answered, "You are right, my good man; in the painful event of a conflict, I may be able to aid. Let me have a gun within my reach."

When Ramarla was thus joined to the active force, they reckoned six armed men, and considered themselves so strong that they went on with more confidence, making a long march on the first day, which brought them through the dense forest into a more open region; which was still. however, well wooded with tropical fruit-trees, and thickly covered with wild rice. They rested beneath a mango, supped on cold beef, and erecting the poles of the litter, threw over them a cotton cloth which they had brought for the purpose; and this tent sheltered them from night dews and troublesome insects, and above all, from the bats and lemurs, which Walter shrank so much from encountering, that Ramarla made him share the protection of the litter. The night scene was beautiful; not a sound broke the stillness that prevailed under the clear, star-lighted blue sky. Nature herself seemed to sleep; and the travellers felt themselves alone with God, as they softly uttered their prayers to Him in that solitude. They recommenced their journey early in the morning, as the mid-day sun forced them to seek shelter from its oppressive rays, and for the first week the brave men held out unsubdued by the constant toil, the enfeebling heat, and the anxiety of continued watchfulness. Fortunately, the rich plains were watered by abundant streams, and fruit, rice, and yams were ready at hand; they could even have birds, when they had energy to seek and shoot them, and they had not yet encountered either pirates, soldiers, or tempests.

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CHAPTER XIII.

The Thunder-storm—The Tropical Rains—A Walk in the Forest—The Citron—The Lace-leafed Plant—The Bread-fruit—Pestilence and Famine—The Travellers' Tree—Sporting on the Marsh—A Fishing Expedition.

AND now the distant mountains were seen dimly in the horizon, which, once surmounted, would introduce the travellers into a new region, certainly more populated, and hence more dangerous, than that they were leaving; yet their progress would not be without its pleasures; for it would daily bring them nearer to the coast from whence they hoped to escape.

"We're out of the range of them pirate rascals now, Master Frank," said Tom, as they rested in the burning noonday under a mango; "but I see as bad an enemy coming again us. Do you mark them there clouds, and do you smell the sulphur? Depend on't, we're in for a broadside afore long, and no harbour in sight."

"Are the rains coming, Tom?" said Walter; "then we are lucky to be under the shelter of this noble tree."

"The taller the mast, the worse its chance," answered Tom, "when the great guns of heaven open on it. Don't you see, boy, there's thunder and lightning coming?"

"Then, Tom," said Mr. Sinclair, "you are certainly right. The open plain will be safer for us than to remain under this lofty tree. But the sun is now overcast; and, though the air is sultry, we had better move forward than linger here."

He had scarcely spoken when a blaze of flame burst from the darkened sky immediately followed by such

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a peal of thunder that the boys thought the very ground beneath their feet trembled, and Walter, in fear and awe, covered his face and prayed. They saw that the lightning had struck a tree not more than twenty yards from them, which was now actually in flames; but the next moment it seemed as if the heavens opened, and a deluge of rain at once quenched the blazing tree, and drove the travellers back to the shelter of the mango.

"We're in for it now, and no mistake," said Tom. "The water comes down in bulk, and it's just a choice, to be wet to the skin abroad, or thunder-struck under the tree. I take it we'd as well make sail, and never heed a shelter."

"Is it the shelther of this roof ye'd be looking for?" said Mike. "Then, bedad, ye'll be cheated, my boys. Will it be them illigant bit leaves as will turn the wather? Ye'd as good set up a glass winder again a cannon-ball."

This was quite true, for the dense foliage of the mango, invaluable as a shade, could not resist the torrent of rain; the taper, lanceolate leaves, though closely placed, bent beneath the weight of water, and diffusing a resinous aroma, suffered the streams to descend on the heads of the uneasy victims below. Hastily enveloping themselves in such cloaks or other defensive garments as they possessed, they set out, Tom catching up Walter and placing him in the litter, which was well defended by the skin covering; then Mike and he took up the poles, and went forward with as much speed as they could through the pelting rain. The sky, which was now completely black, opened at intervals to emit the fiery flashes, while the terrific thunder was incessant; and though the continual rain cooled the air, the long wet grass through which they toiled, and the heavy drops which fell upon them, rendered their march painful and difficult.

For two hours they persevered in their irksome

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course ; then the rain suddenly ceased, the sun blazed forth, and the wearied bearers set down the litter and rested beneath the dropping foliage of a spreading fig-tree.

"How I wish we were at the mountains," said Frank, looking wistfully at the distant dark line, still indistinct in form. "We might then meet with caves to shelter us from the rain, which I fear will return, for there are yet many black clouds."

"Ay, ay, there's no doubt we shall have these storms, off and on, for months," said Tom.

"It is but too true, Frank," said Mr. Sinclair. "It is an unfortunate season for our compulsory flight, as from January to March we are continually liable to these rains ; but the intervals of fair weather will enable us to proceed slowly, and we shall have the blessing of the cool air, the freshness and the fragrance which result from these refreshing showers. I did not expect you especially, Mike, to look so miserable."

"It's not altogether that same, master," said Mike, gloomily ; "but will we be ating the praties uncooked, and where will we get dhry sticks for the fire; and they all soaked through with wather?"

"We must wait patiently till the grass and the twigs are dried," answered Mr. Sinclair. "In the mean time we can eat some fruit. See, there is a cocoa-nut palm ; if we could procure some nuts, we should find them more nutritious than the mangoes."

"Will I run up for a few?" asked Mike ; and receiving a ready assent, he mounted the palm as nimbly as a monkey, and sent down a supply of nuts, most acceptable to the hungry, toil-worn men. Before night, more heavy showers fell, from which the slight tent was but an ineffectual shelter ; and it required the vast labour they had undergone during the day to obtain them the sleep so needful to reinvigorate them, amidst the thunder, lightning, and splashing rain of that unpleasant night.

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But the morning broke with a bright sun, which soon dried the tent and the cloaks, and even the long grass and some twigs, which enabled them to make a fire, to boil some yams, make tea, and set out after breakfast with more cheerfulness. The day continued fine, and they made a considerable progress, shot some pigeons, and before night could make out the form of the rugged mountains, which rose to an immense height before them, and they ate their supper of roast pigeons merrily and hopefully.

Still, for some days the thunder and rain continued to annoy them. They grew weary of eating fruit; the wild rice had disappeared, and, so far from the coast, the cocoa-nut became rare. They had still a small quantity of *charqui*, but it had got wet, and was beginning to mould.

"Do you think, Frank, we shall be famished?" asked Walter.

"Famished, boy! why should we be famished?" answered Frank, "when we have pigeons for the trouble of drawing a bow, and mangoes for climbing the trees? Then I see other fruits now ripe; but I do not like to delay our journey by asking Mr. Sinclair to go and tell us what they are. Suppose, as you and I are off duty just now, that we make a sally into yon wood at the left, and try to pick up something eatable."

"I will take my Botany," said Walter.

"And I will take my knife and a basket," said Frank.

And thus prepared, according to their several tastes, the two boys entered a grove of tall trees, and looked round with pleasure on the beautiful flowers and tempting fruits that surrounded them. They paused at the edge of a running stream, and looked with wonder and delight on the tall, superb *arums* which stood near, all towering above their heads, and resplendent with lovely flowers.

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"Some of these arums," said Walter, referring to his book, "have edible roots, though the fruit is poisonous. Do you think we ought to dig up some of the roots and try them?"

"No, certainly not," answered Frank. "First, we have no spade to dig with; and next, we should risk poisoning ourselves. We will leave the arum roots in the ground, and go on a little further."

"But do stop, Frank, till I reach some of these strange and beautiful plants growing under the water. I cannot guess what they are; but I should like to show them to Mr. Sinclair and Ramarla."

"Well, well, there's a lot of them for you," said Frank; "but, for my part, pretty as they may be, they're not useful, Wally, and I would rather carry away a cocoa-nut or two, or a basket of yams. But what have we here, my boy?" continued he, pointing to a bright-leafed tree, which was covered at the same time with rich purple flowers, and large, curious fruit, the delicious odour of which was most grateful. "Can these be lemons? Still the lemon is not so large or so rough, and the smell is different. Do look into your book, Walter. Is it worth while pulling them? Are they eatable?"

"Don't be in such a hurry, Frank," replied Walter. "I can't find it out all at once. Yes, it certainly must be of the genus *Citrus;* but it is not either the orange or the lemon. Perhaps it may be the citron, which is very good when candied; but though the smell is so charming, it is a very ugly, warty-looking fruit, and I doubt it will not be what you call useful. Still we must take some, and some of those magnificent scarlet flowers, which grow in such bunches on the tall tree with the pea-green leaves. Ah! here comes Mr. Sinclair.—Do be so kind as tell me, sir, what is the name of this stately acacia-like tree?"

"It is *Poinciana regia*, my dear boy," answered Mr. Sinclair; "called by the French inhabitants of the

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country *millefleurs*, a truly royal tree in its towering magnificence. You have there, I see, the citron, a more useful acquisition. And this aquatic plant is the rare and curious *lattice* or *lace-leafed plant*. Observe, these leaves are merely skeleton, all fibre and vein, wrought in a lace-like pattern, and showing every shade of green as they unfold, till they pass through several stages to perfection. These graceful gossamer leaves never look so beautiful as when spreading horizontally below the surface of the water. That fleshy root, shaped like ginger, is cooked and eaten by the natives, and resembles the yam in taste; but I think we had better leave it; for even my weak eyes can discern something more important to our welfare than you have yet found. Do you recognize that common-looking tree, with its very uncommon fruit?"

"The bread-fruit!" cried Walter, throwing down his book, and clapping his hands. "I want no book to find out that. I have seen many pictures of it; and I should have known it in any place, by the long, curiously-formed leaves, as well as by the melon-shaped fruit. Look, Frank, they are perfect breakfast loaves; every one as big as my head. We must carry off a load of them."

"Just as many as we require, and no more, my boy," said Mr. Sinclair; "for if not eaten when fresh gathered, the substance we compare to bread becomes hard and indigestible. That will do, Frank; half a dozen loaves will amply suffice us, and do not let us delay longer; for clouds are again gathering in the sky."

But Walter made another halt as they returned through the wood, saying, "Do listen, Mr. Sinclair; that is not the cry of either pigeon or parrot; it must surely be the guinea-fowl?"

"It is probably the call of a native fowl of the *Meleagrinæ* family," said Mr. Sinclair, "which is ex-

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ceedingly useful to the inhabitants of the interior, who are excluded from sharing the cultivated luxuries of the towns near the coast. I regret that you did not bring your bows; but, doubtless, your keen young eyes will discover the nests, which are usually plentifully filled with the delicate eggs."

The nests were found, and a large plunder effected; fifty or sixty eggs were carried off, and though reluctant to abandon the birds, the boys now hastened to return, that they might cook some food before the rain came to prevent them.

The fire was ready, the bread-fruit was sliced and toasted, and the eggs were boiled. They all ate heartily, and succeeded in cooking the rest of the provision for the future before the rain came on; and unwilling to relinquish their efforts, they toiled on wearily and sadly through the pitiless rain during the whole day, and even at night it could hardly be called rest that they obtained, stretched on the damp swampy earth, ineffectually sheltered by the dripping cotton tent. For a whole week this rain continued incessantly; at the end of that time the sun broke forth, the reeking earth sent up an unwholesome vapour, and beneath the mid-day heat, the spiritless travellers sunk down under a low thorny tree, too much exhausted even to make an attempt to raise a tent to shelter them from the sun, which beamed over their heads with a fervour unknown to our temperate climates.

In addition to the weariness and lassitude caused by toil, heat, and the malaria, they had now to contend with the pangs of hunger and thirst. For the first time since they left the caves, they had entered on a desert region, transformed into a temporary marsh by the continual rains. No trees were visible except some thorny shrubs, and for the last few days, they had had no water except what they caught in a bucket during the rain. Not a sound of life was heard around them; neither bird nor insect was to be seen. It was

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indeed the silent, trackless, barren desert; "The path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen."

About ten or twelve miles before them—not more than a day's journey if they had been in the freshness and vigour of their first setting out—rose the gigantic mountains which they longed, yet dreaded to reach. Ramarla was quite unacquainted with any pass nearer than forty or fifty miles to the south, and to deviate so far would plunge them into unknown difficulties. It was therefore resolved that they should at least attempt, under any difficulties, to endeavour to cross at this lonely spot; for whatever unknown perils awaited them, they hoped thus to escape the desert and the pirates.

"It'll never do to swelter in this furnace," said Tom. "Here, Mike, man, you're good for work yet; lend a hand, and let's rig up that awning, and then we may turn in, and maybe get some sleep to freshen us."

"Is it slape, then, you're thinking on, mate?" answered Mike. "Will it be slape as will fill us? sorra a bit of that! Now, take it aisy, my jewel; sure will my arrums be altogether slaping. Will it be the powls as is heavy afther this rain? Musha! musha! Who'd be thinking as Mike Ryan was the boy to be overtaken with a wakeness!"

Mike was indeed overtaken, like all the rest, with the *wakeness*, consequent on want of food: the two younger were unable to move or speak; the elder men, more accustomed to privations, held out longer. When the tent was at length raised, they all tried to rest till the sun became less scorching; then Mr. Sinclair proposed to Tom, who was the strongest of the party, to accompany him a short distance towards the north, where he thought he saw some traces of vegetation.

"It may possibly," said he, "be some pool which is

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near, that has given a greener hue to the shrubs. Take the bucket, Tom ; we must endeavour to obtain some relief for this intolerable suffering."

Supporting themselves on their spears, the two men slowly made their way towards the green speck. As they drew near, the long grass, and the moist state of the ground showed they were entering a marsh, and at length to their great joy, they distinguished a grove of tall trees resembling the palm or plantain in form, having immensely long leaves, spread out like a gigantic fan.

"Them's grand fellows, sir," said Tom ; "they've not run up all that way, without water at hand, depend on it."

"And even if we do not find water near," said Mr. Sinclair, "we shall find some within them. These trees are, I feel assured, 'the Travellers' Tree,' or, as the natives name it, *Ravinala*, a blessing to the weary traveller in a dry and thirsty land. We must at once bring the litter up to these wonderful trees ; but stay, first attend to my directions."

Mr. Sinclair selected the lowest of the trees ; and then, according to his instruction, Tom struck his spear deep into the thick end of the stalk of a leaf, and when it was withdrawn a stream of clear water ran out, which they carefully received in the bucket ; and having first quenched their own thirst with this cool, sweet water, they pierced several leaves, till they had filled the bucket, and then returned with all speed to succour their distressed companions, and to assist in removing them to this advantageous position. After being well refreshed by the cooling draught, the boys heard with astonishment that the fountain from whence this precious water had been drawn was a living tree ; and the hopes of looking on this vegetable wonder gave them energy to march forward to it.

Walter was mute with astonishment as he walked amongst these majestic trees, many of which rose thirty

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feet from the ground before the leaves commenced, and Mr. Sinclair showed him a natural cavity at the base of each leaf-stalk, which was usually from six to eight feet long. Into this cavity, the water which has been collected on the broad, ribbed leaf, flows through a groove on the upper side of the stalk, and is deposited and preserved for a special blessing. The leaves themselves are waterproof, and are usefully employed for thatching huts, and even are formed into plates and spoons. Every portion of the precious tree is valuable to the natives.

The sound of some living creature was heard, and Frank called out for a bow, adding, "I am sure I hear ducks or geese. I shall be certain to hit them; for hunger sharpens one's skill, and I feel as if I was William Tell."

Walter could laugh now, for cheerfulness and hope were returning to all, and he also took a bow, and followed Frank, directed by the cries of the birds to a muddy pool, or rather a watery swamp, which was covered with wild fowl, paddling, plunging, and feeding on some unseen luxuries buried in the marsh. The boys were fortunate enough to kill two brace of ducks before the twang of the bow, or the sight of their murdered friends had alarmed the flock and put them to flight; but it was long before the whole assembled party, with the aid of ropes, spears, and wading through the treacherous marsh, succeeded in recovering their game, which they were determined should not be lost for want of efforts. Besides the ducks, they found nests among the reeds, containing abundance of eggs, which, being speedily cooked, helped to allay their ravenous hunger, till the fowls could be plucked and roasted. Then, with fervent thanksgiving for this providential relief, they gladly sought their rest in this region of comparative plenty. After laying in a store of water and eggs for the day, they set out again in excellent spirits; and though the bearers of the

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litter were, not unfrequently, leg-deep in the marshy ground, they were merry over these minor misfortunes, and went on with vigour till night brought them to a verdant sloping plain, which was actually the commencement of the mountain ascent, and where they encamped at the side of a clear running stream, in which they saw, to their great joy, a number of bright-coloured fishes sporting. But they were too tired to angle, so they supped on cold duck, and planned a grand fishing next morning if the rains did not disappoint them.

It was a pleasant morning, and Walter ransacked the portmanteau for his fishing-book, now needed for the first time; and the men having cut some long reeds for fishing-rods, they attached lines and hooks, and such flies as they thought might be attractive, though certainly they would be new to the foreign fry. Then they sat down on some stones, and began patiently to angle, watching with admiration the pretty green and gold fishes sporting like playful children in the clear stream, on the bottom of which glittered pebbles, which Walter declared must be precious stones, and Frank, who somewhat doubted the fact, said, even if they should be topazes and emeralds, he would rather have the fish, which would be more useful.

They soon filled a basket—curiosity or indiscretion tempting the restless fry to venture on the strange insects; and the anglers then had time to look round them. Walter was rather alarmed at the sight of numbers of green lizards running up the trees, and could hardly convince himself that the creatures were harmless. Then Frank's line having got twisted round the stone on which he sat, they were obliged to lift it up, and, to their horror, a large angry-looking scorpion appeared beneath it. It was at least ten inches in length, and while it curled its long tail over its back, it darted forward towards the disturbers with

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such deadly intent, that their first impulse was to take to flight; but somewhat ashamed of their cowardice, they turned back to recover their fish, and to take their leave of the scorpion, which they did not wait to vanquish.

"I suppose if it had crept out of its hiding-place when we were lost in our angling," said Walter, "it would have seized the first leg it had met with in its long lobster-like claws, and then stung with that fearful angry-looking tail. I'm not sure, Frank, that a scorpion is not a worse antagonist than a babyroussa.

CHAPTER XIV.

Now for the Mountains—The Impenetrable Forest—Over the Cliffs — A Grand Haul — Awkward Bird-nesting — The Mountain Storm—The Robbers' Cave—Unpleasant Opposite Neighbours.

THE fish, a species of mullet, a new and plentiful fresh diet, was received with great satisfaction.

"An we could fall in with a frying-pan," said Mike, "wouldn't I be the boy as would show ye an illigant dish of fish. But wouldn't it be a sin, Master Walter, to boil these purty craturs?"

"Then you can broil them, Mike," answered he; "we will make you a gridiron of these damp reeds, which will not soon take fire. Let us have broiled fish, by all means."

So the travellers had for breakfast broiled fish, toasted bread-fruit, and tea with eggs beat up instead of cream; and Mr. Sinclair declared he was quite ashamed of such extravagant luxury.

"And now for the mountains," cried Frank, after breakfast; and they all gazed with wonder on the terrific masses of rock piled on rock, the work of suc-

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cessive ages, which seemed a barrier to forbid the intrusion of man to the regions beyond.

Yet it was only by the rugged points and masses that stood out here and there, that the nature of the mountain range could be detected. You saw only before you one stupendous forest of lofty trees, rising by degrees into the clouds; these trees densely matted together with underwood and creeping plants extending as far as the eye could reach on either hand.

"How shall we ever pass this forest which no one has ever crossed before?" said Walter. "It is like one of the enchanted woods of the fairy tales; and we shall need the wand of the good fairy to open a way for us."

"The wand must be that of industry and perseverance," said Mr. Sinclair. "We have an axe, knives, and stout limbs; I only fear for our friend's litter."

"We must take in the canvas and lower the masts," observed Tom.

"Will we sling him a hammock?" said Mike. "It would be convanient altogether."

Mike's proposal was carried: the litter was unrigged, as Tom would have said, and packed up in as small a compass as could be effected, and with the boxes, kettles, &c., slung on the backs of the travellers. Then the useful rug was once more converted into a hammock, knotted to the poles, and in this Ramarla was easily carried on the shoulders of two men. They boldly faced the mountain forest, cutting or forcing their way up the steep ascents, and down into sudden deep hollows, passing lofty ancient trees, amongst which shone conspicuously the tall bright-coloured tree-ferns. Path there was none; they trampled now on the brushwood, now on the muddy slippery soil, which was scattered over with loose stones fallen from the rock: every footstep was difficult and dangerous, and many times the helpless Ramarla expected to be thrown from his insecure litter, or to

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be struck senseless by a blow from the outstretching arm of a tree.

The travellers were compelled to pause every five minutes, and while clinging to the branches for support, to cut away the graceful garlands of creeping plants which wound round the trunks, and flung themselves from tree to tree, uniting them with bonds which only the axe could separate, and which sometimes rendered the way so impervious that they had to deviate widely from their direct course to avoid them.

They had not progressed more than a mile, when, overcome with fatigue, they were tempted to a spot where a gleam of light seemed to indicate an opening. It was a deep ravine, across which several gigantic trees had fallen, leaving a tolerably clear space, where they sat down on the trunks of the fallen trees to rest, breathless and dejected, and looked round with awe and wonder; almost with terror.

"Surely we are the first that ever penetrated this forest," said Walter, in a subdued tone. "Do you think, dear Ramarla, we shall ever be able to get through it?"

"We can only accomplish it by the help of God," answered he. "It is plain to me, my unfortunate companions, that we have fallen on a most difficult spot for our attempt. This immense belt of mountain forest, which runs down the whole country, is, I have heard, in some places forty miles in breadth, though broken here and there by valleys. I earnestly trust we have not plunged into the worst part, or we must find it to us impassable; or, at any rate, you must necessarily abandon me, the great cause of your suffering, and the impediment to your escape. Could we but overcome the ascent, and pass to the east, we should find the descent easier and probably better cleared, for there are villages over the plains. And once having attained them, we shall be in little danger,

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except from the common difficulties of the journey; for the rude village tribes, at least till we draw near the coast, are peaceful, except to their professed enemies. Many of them, indeed, pine for that freedom of commerce with European nations to be restored, by which they formerly obtained useful necessaries, and even luxuries, now unknown; cotton for garments, knives, crockery, and musical instruments, of which the few remnants that now remain are highly prized. I cannot at all ascertain our exact position; but, if we succeed in attaining the plains, and can reach the district of Maroa, where my family have long held possessions, I have no fear but we shall meet with friends to forward our escape."

They remained in this open spot to eat their dinner, and succeeded in taking a few pigeons. Here also they had time to examine and admire the magnificent tree-ferns, of infinite variety, the beautiful areca palm, and bamboos of curious and new forms. The creeping plants that entwined them were covered with rich and varied flowers, and Walter felt quite a pang to see them cut down and scattered, to make a passage between the trees.

They felt more vigorous after their rest, and marched forward cheerfully, sometimes meeting with almost perpendicular steps, which compelled them to deviate, till, at the close of the day, they descended to the open glade of a little valley, where, amidst the deep solitude of the untrodden forest, they slept without dread of disturbance from man or beast; the fluttering of the bats and the querulous cries of the lemurs alone breaking the stillness of the night.

Morning awoke them to the sight of the wilderness that surrounded them, the bare rocks just visible here and there through the dense foliage of the mighty wall of forest that lay before them. A clear stream of pure water which flowed across the valley refreshed them after their morning meal; then once more they

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began to force their way up the mountain. But very soon they fell upon a sort of rude path, evidently formed by man or beast breaking through the creepers, and trampling down the underwood; and, though not quite satisfied with these traces, they availed themselves of them, and pursued the path till they came upon another valley, which was covered with a herd of wild cattle, certainly resembling the buffalo or bison more than the English ox, the hump between the shoulders being a distinguishing feature.

However pleasant might be the prospect of obtaining fresh meat, the sight of the herd was somewhat alarming; and their first step, suggested by Tom, was to suspend the hammock of Ramarla to the branches of a tree, out of the reach of the beasts, before they were startled by the presence of man, or hostilities should be commenced. Then making every prudent arrangement, they loaded their guns as the most certain mode of destruction; Mike and Tom fired first, the boys being ordered to reserve their shots for defence, if necessary. Fortunately this was not needed, for two of the animals fell; and the rest, alarmed by the report, echoed among the rocks, fled through some outlet of the valley, and were lost in the recesses of the mountains. Then the men gladly descended to the field of victory, dispatched the wounded animals, skinned, and cut them up. A whole day was spent in cooking and drying the meat, and they all enjoyed the rest in this lonely spot.

Another day or two carried them into still higher regions, wilder and ruder in their features. Here, yawning chasms, bare rocks, and rugged peaks were disclosed, formidably visible amidst the continued dark forest; and they often marched fearfully along the brink of a precipice, or with slow and cautious steps beneath some overhanging rock, that seemed ready to fall and crush them. At length they reached a narrow hem of path, or rather a deep furrow, skirted on one

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side by a wall of rock, and open on the other to a measureless abyss, along which they proceeded in single file with deliberate and careful steps.

A curious unknown plant which grew near the edge of this perilous path tempted Walter to venture near to examine it; but before even he could stoop down to look at it, the loose, crumbling rock gave way, and he disappeared down that frightful chasm. A loud cry from Frank first proclaimed the dreadful catastrophe; he sprung forward, and when the considerate Mr. Sinclair arrested him, he flung himself on the neck of the good man, exclaiming,—

"Oh, let me go! let me go! I don't care for the danger; my dear, dear Walter will be lost; he is my only friend! my brother! and this is all my doing!"

"Arrah! be aisy, boy," said Mike. "Is it two on ye want to be kilt? Will we be bothered afther ye both? Now, Tom, be taking a sight and then sing out."

Tom was lying stretched out across the path, with his face over the edge of the precipice, and to the great relief of Frank he heard him cry out, "Hold taut, thereaway, and we'll lower a rope in no time. He's all right, my boys; laid at anchor comfortable on a thorn-bush. Now, Mike, hand over a rope with a knot."

A coil of rope had been brought to aid in hauling the packages up the most difficult steps of the mountain, and one end of this was furnished with a noose by the experienced sailors, and then cast over the edge of the cliff, the other end was passed round one tree and carefully secured to another, and the rope was grasped by the two men.

"Now my boy," shouted Tom, "you'll slip the knot over your shoulders; not round your neck, mind, then put your arms through it, and steer yourself as steadily as you can while we haul up."

Much of the face of the almost perpendicular rock

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was clothed with thorny bushes, a fortunate defence; and after Walter had secured the rope round him, he picked up, out of his unpleasant bed, half the spear he had held, and which had been broken as he fell; and with the aid of this staff, he contrived to ward off any dangerous collision with the bare rock, as he was slowly drawn up by the united efforts of the able hands above. He could not, however, avoid coming in contact with the thorny bushes, which, though far from agreeable, he gladly caught at from time to time to support him in case the rope should fail.

It was a fearful sight to look down on the slight form of the boy, suspended by a frail, worn rope over an abyss of many hundred feet in depth, where the masses of sharp rocks, lying piled in confusion below, denounced certain death if he should fall, while the loose stones which bounded down from above, moved by the exertions of his friends, threatened to fall with destruction on his head. What joy and thankfulness filled every heart when they saw his pale face, streaming with blood from the thorns he had encountered, appear above the edge of the cliff. Then, Tom, putting the rope into the hands of Mr. Sinclair and Mike, went forward to assist Frank to land him safely. But as soon as his foot touched the firm ground, the over-excited and exhausted boy looked wildly round, uttered a feeble cry, and fainted.

The care of his anxious friends, and some brandy from the yet unexhausted bottle, soon restored him to consciousness; and he was able to join in thanksgiving to God for his miraculous preservation. And after awhile, Frank, after shedding tears of joy over him, began to scold him heartily for his carelessness in venturing to such a dangerous place.

"But wasn't it lucky, Frank," said the boy, "that I should just happen to fall on the very bush that held the nest of this curious bird?" producing from his breast a black paroquet, just feathered. "I know by

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the hooked bill with the upper hinge, and the toes placed two before and two behind, that it belongs to the family of Climbers. I left another young one in the nest to console the poor parent bird; but I thought I might bring away one to tame. It bites dreadfully, young as it is, and my fingers have come to the worst."

"Musha! but it's a queer boy ye are, and that's thrue altogether!" said Mike. "And sure ye'd taken it aisy to be bird-nesting down yonder; and you stuck again the rock like a fly again the mainmast. Worra, my jewel! but ye'll maybe be having worse luck, if ye be thrying that same again."

"I don't think I shall try it again, Mike," answered he. "I am very, very sorry that my imprudence has caused such distress to you all; and depend on it I shall be careful how I peep over a precipice again. But, Mr. Sinclair, do observe what a gap there is between yon two towering pinnacles; should there not be a pass between them?"

"Assuredly there is," said Ramarla, much agitated. "I recognize those two remarkable peaks, though I have only seen them from the east, from whence there is a path which leads up to some caverns that lie within the shelter of these rocks. These caverns, in the time of my father, were the resort of a lawless race of freebooters, who could, without difficulty, defend the narrow pass that conducted to their abode, which was always considered to be inaccessible from the west. I earnestly hope those wretches are now dispersed; for, in the time to which I refer, they were a desperate and much dreaded horde of villains, devastating the cultured grounds of the plains, and even, occasionally, making excursions to the coast, to seize the provision vessels that arrived from Bourbon or the Mauritius, and, when pursued, retreating to their secure mountain fortress. As we have chanced to come on the spot, we must inevitably proceed; there is no mode of avoiding the hazard."

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This was an alarming prospect; the guns were all charged and distributed, and the cautious, orderly march was continued along the side of a lofty cliff, almost perpendicular, where a narrow path, on which only one person could walk, had been formed by nature or art; but this path was so overgrown with moss and creepers that it was plain it was rarely, if ever, trodden. The sides of the rocky wall were shrouded with creeping plants, and on their left hand yawned a deep, but narrow chasm, which divided this pinnacle of rock, from a similar one opposite. They looked round with intense interest for the robbers' cave which, they concluded, these rocks contained, but could see no openings; and in silent, monotonous march, they went on through this dismal division, which seemed to them, in their weariness, to be interminable.

Suddenly, the thunder burst out in deafening volleys—

> "From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
> Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
> But every mountain now has found a tongue."

And amidst the crash of a hundred echoes, and the fiery flashes of the lightning along the darkened sky, the rain poured down in torrents upon the defenceless travellers. At length, Walter's scrutinizing eye detected a small opening close to the ground, which certainly did not look like the entrance to a robbers' cave; therefore, he ventured to creep into it, and he ascertained that here was a shelter for the whole party. With some difficulty, the tall men and their luggage were stowed in a small, dark hollow, where they could scarcely stand or move, and which, though it certainly protected them from the rain, rendered the roaring of the thunder still more awful and deafening.

For some time conversation was impossible, but at

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length the thunder died away; the rain, however, still continued so heavy, that it was agreed they should sleep in this close, unpleasant retreat. As it was impossible to have a fire, they contented themselves with a supper of cold meat, and by placing the bucket outside, they obtained sufficient rain-water to quench their thirst, though it was unpalatable, being discoloured and mixed with leaves, stones, and earth.

They gladly issued from their den at an early hour in the morning, hailed a clear sky and fresh air, and were soon marching on their narrow path, now rendered slippery and dangerous by the rain; but they trod it with caution, and were in good spirits, till Frank, who led the way, suddenly stopped, and pointing to the far side of the chasm, cried out, "the robbers!"

In great alarm, they turned to observe a body of fierce-looking men emerging from a wide-mouthed tavern. They were clothed only in the lamba, or loose robe of the natives, which is usually made of coarse rofia cloth, and which did not cover their strong, naked limbs. They appeared to have guns, as well as spears; but the chasm, which happily divided them from the observers, was at least a hundred and fifty yards across, and prevented their accoutrements being fully distinguished. It was soon evident that the robbers also had discovered their opposite neighbours; for, with shouts and yells, they were gathering together as if to consult on the plan of attack.

At first they discharged a shower of spears, which fell harmlessly into the gulf, and the travellers went on unscathed, quickly, and apparently unheeding their foes. A few shots were then fired ineffectually; either the guns were of inferior manufacture, or the owners were unskilled in this mode of warfare.

"Hadn't we better give them a broadside?" said Tom, "we should do some mischief among them, lubberly rascals as they are."

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"We had better reserve our defence till necessity compels us to have recourse to it," said Mr. Sinclair. "We may come to close quarters, and then must fight; God pardon us!"

"It's just a trade, master," said Tom. "You'd think little on it, if you'd been brought up to it, no more nor a butcher does to fell an ox."

"Nevertheless, my friend," replied Mr. Sinclair, "God has forbidden us to shed blood; and only to defend life would I sanction such a doubtful necessity."

"Sure, it's not a brave soldier ye'd be making, master," said Mike. "Musha! were ye but seeing the blood spouting among the boys at a shindy, when they're mad at the fair, and sorra a pin worse next day, not a boy of them!"

Mr. Sinclair remonstrated in the matter of *shindies*: but Mike could not be made to see the iniquity of "a scrimmage without ill blood."

In the meantime the savage-looking wretches on the opposite side of the chasm moved along with the travellers, threatening them by vindictive gestures and howls which were but indistinctly heard; but they discontinued any hostile attack, which the distance rendered unavailing; especially now, when the widening chasm still farther separated them; and though all approach was still fortunately impossible, the travellers anticipated with fear the moment that might bring them into closer contact.

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CHAPTER XV.

The East of the Mountains—New Fruit-trees—A Serpent—The Aye-aye—The Sugar-cane — Pursuit — A Skirmish — The Rescue—Malagasy Hospitality—The Rofia Cloth—Domestic Slavery.

Now the opening pass showed that they might commence the descent on the east side, and the receding cliff allowed them to select a path which removed them nearly out of sight of the inimical robbers, and though still through a thick forest, their march was easier and more rapid. Deviating a little to the south, they entered on a scene of great beauty. Noble forest trees, from which sprung orchids of various brilliant hues, and of forms strange and even grotesque; elegant ferns; fruit trees, some in blossom, and others laden with ripe fruit; the lime, the citron, the banana, and above all, the bread-fruit, held out a prospect of abundance which they needed but the sense of security to enjoy.

They could still, though now at a great distance, obtain a view of their enemies; but on reaching the banks of a river from the mountains, they succeeded with some difficulty in crossing to the south side, and this river being soon augmented by numerous tributaries from the mountains, became an important barrier, along the banks of which they continued their march, hoping to follow its course to the sea.

They now met with the *Pandanus*, especially one species, with its tall, straight stem, and crown of feathery, ribbon-like leaves; and a large spreading tree with bright green leaves, which grew in pairs on a stem like those of the ash, and with pods of fruit hanging in bunches, Mr. Sinclair told them this was the tamarind, which was very satisfactory to the boys,

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who both declared they liked tamarinds very much. "You have only eaten the fruit as a preserve," he replied, "when the sugar had rendered the pulp luscious and rich. When fresh, you will find them more acid than you expect, nevertheless, the juice, when mingled with water, makes a cool and delicious drink. By a beautiful provision of Nature, the delicious freshness is preserved by the leaves closing round the fruit when young and green, as soon as the sun sets, and thus preserving it from the pernicious effects of the night dew. Southey, a poet of Nature, writes,—

> "'"Tis the cool evening hour;
> The tamarind from the dew
> Sheathes its young fruit, yet green.'"

Beneath the shade of the tamarind they rested in the heat of the day, and feasted on the pleasant fruit; they had now lost sight of their dangerous pursuers and were full of enjoyment and hope. The restless boys did not long remain here; they were tempted by the sight of a splendid new *Oleander*, to seek it across a verdant glade; but were arrested in their way, and horrified at the sight of a brilliant serpent, about twelve feet in length, and as thick as a man's arm, which lay coiled up, sleeping in the sun. Leaving the flowers unplucked, the boys fled back in dismay, and though Mr. Sinclair, when he saw the snake, said the bite was not considered venomous, no one felt inclined to remain in the neighbourhood, or to risk irritating it. They promptly resumed their march, thankful to leave behind them so abhorred a creature, and for the remainder of the day, the boys felt no further inclination to botanize.

At night they rested under another tamarind-tree, where they were disturbed by the odd, melancholy cry of the lemurs which peopled the tree, and Walter, who had been obliged to set his pet at liberty, in order

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to reduce the travelling establishment, had a great desire for another of the ghostly animals. But, from an adjacent tree, a still more curious cry attracted them, and a strange creature, deceived by the stillness that reigned around, ventured to descend, and to the great amusement of the watchful boys, sitting on its hind legs began to scratch the bark of the tree with its human-like hands, with which it conveyed the spoil it obtained, probably insects, to its mouth.

"What is it, Mr. Sinclair?" cried Walter, rousing up the whole party by his curiosity. "What is it? is it a lemur, or a monkey, or a squirrel?"

"If you observe," answered Mr. Sinclair, "its large round eyes, its broad bat-like ears, its grey colour, and its thick bushy tail, you will see it is distinct from the lemur. Besides it is a much larger animal; it is known under the generic title of *Cheiromys*, but is popularly named the *Aye-aye*, from the two melancholy syllables which form its cry. It is, I believe, peculiar to Madagascar; but is rarely seen, partly from its nocturnal habits, and partly from the timidity which leads it to shun the haunts of men; which, Ramarla tells me, we are now approaching."

In the morning they ascended a low green hill which lay before them, and from the summit had a view of the wide-spreading fertile, level plains; and though it was a matter of rejoicing that they had no longer the difficulties of the mountain forest to contend with, this was still counterbalanced by the dread of encountering the band of robbers on the open plains, where it would be impossible to escape from them. Yet, for some time they continued to follow the course of the river without interruption or molestation, till some sounds at a distance directed their attention to a clump of trees on the opposite bank, from which, to their great vexation, they saw the lawless horde emerge, shouting, and threatening with their spears, which were, however, happily useless, for the river

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was two hundred yards across at this place, too deep to ford, and no canoes seemed to be at hand. But as they continued to follow the course of the travellers, it was feared some bridge or ford did exist lower down, or, as Ramarla suggested, it was probable that on the lower plains, the river might spread, and become shallow enough to be forded.

"But," continued he, "look straight before you; yon cluster of towering rofia-palms stands before a village, where my name will procure us friends and a refuge. As soon as we reach the cultivated grounds, fear not—I shall be able to protect you."

This cheering prospect animated them to redoubled exertion, and they had accomplished many miles before their noonday rest; still tracked, however, by their untiring foes. They had heard the grunting of the babyroussa among the trees, as they came along; but they would not linger to kill or cook meat, and, therefore, contented themselves with a dinner of *charqui*, and with some bunches of bananas which they had gathered by the way. Frank and Walter, soon tired of inaction, wandered off after dinner to a grove of canes, twelve or fifteen feet in height, to cut some walking-sticks. Walter selected a low shoot, and had cut it away by a knotty joint, when he suddenly called out, "See, see, Frank, how the juice runs out! And it is sweet—delicious. It must be the sugar-cane. Do come, let us take some to Mr. Sinclair."

Frank did not feel the strong emotion that his friend experienced at this discovery; and even when Mr. Sinclair and Ramarla confirmed the fact that this was really the sugar-cane, which was indigenous in many parts of the island, but rarely cultivated, he merely observed, "Well, at any rate, it will be of no use to us; we cannot stay here to make sugar, which, I know, is a long process."

"Certainly not, my boy," answered Mr. Sinclair; "but, nevertheless, let us be thankful that God has

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directed our wanderings to a land of plenty. The sugar-cane will be an agreeable and nutritious addition to our diet of dried beef, and we must take some of the canes with us. But tell me, you young ones, whose eyes are better than mine, what are yon troublesome men busy about?"

Walter's glass was produced, and he soon called out, "Oh, sir! they're making rafts—they're coming over to attack us!"

"Then," said Ramarla, "we must venture, even under this hot sun, to march forward, and endeavour to reach the village. Once over the river, they would overpower us by their superior numbers and their dangerous spears. In our fire-arms we, doubtless, have an advantage; for they are unskilful in the management of their guns: but those fatal spears are sometimes dipped in poison, against which no defence is available."

The next minute they were again on the road, each carrying a loaded gun, and depositing the rest of his incumbrances in the litter; their road was unimpeded, and even, as they soon discovered, trodden by the naked feet of the natives. They had gained a quarter of a mile in advance before the rafts were launched; but they were aware that if they did not reach a refuge before the robbers landed, they must soon be overtaken, encumbered as they were with the litter.

"God be thanked!" said Ramarla, who saw, as he was raised above the long grass, a man at work in some rice-grounds, and hailed him loudly. The man raised his head, saw the procession of strange people, and turned to flee in haste; but Ramarla, in his clear, articulate tones, called out some words in the Malagasy tongue, and the native paused, but half-reassured. By that time Tom and Mike had brought the litter up to the spot, and Ramarla quickly ordered the man to fetch up aid from the village, pointing out to him the band of invaders pursuing them. The countryman,

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who was not encumbered with any garments except the lamba bound round him, started off like lightning, followed at a much more sober pace by the travellers, who saw with dismay that their enemies, who were now landed, rapidly gained on them.

"If we can but hold out a quarter of an hour," said Ramarla, "I will engage that we shall be reinforced. Speed on vigorously as long as we are beyond the reach of the spears, then turn round and fire a volley, which will confuse them, and allow us to make a little way."

This prudent advice was followed; the first spear that fell within a yard of them was the signal, the litter was set down, and the men fired three at once, to allow time to load again. After the six guns had been fired, the shrieks and confusion that followed enabled the pursued to make another hundred yards before the showering spears warned them to try another volley; and before they had twice fired they saw with joy a dark crowd moving from the village, which they trusted was the relieving party. The robbers now took to their guns, which they fired ineffectually, and less afraid of these than the spears, the travellers kept their ground, firing return shots, till the approach of a numerous body of men, yelling and waving their long spears, was perceived by the foe, who, firing a final volley, turned round, and retreated with precipitation.

About fifty natives, clad like the first they had seen, in lambas of rofia cloth, came up, and gathered round Ramarla with loud and joyful vociferation. He addressed them in a long speech, pointing out to them the friends who had rescued him from the sea and the pirates, nursed him in his sickness and infirmity, and brought him, with incredible labour, across the country, and through the midst of the robbers; and he now commanded his people to thank and assist these kind strangers. The men bowed down with reverence to the Europeans, and offered to serve them with all

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their efforts, even at the cost of their lives. They would have brought litters to convey the whole party to the village; but Ramarla was satisfied that they should carry the litter and all the burthens, to relieve his friends. Before they set out, they went forward to the field of their antagonists' warfare, and found four men lying dead; the wounded had, they concluded, been carried off by their friends.

"Ought we not to bury these bodies?" asked Walter.

"Prudence commands us to make no unnecessary delay, my boy," replied Ramarla. "Doubtless, when they have ascertained our departure, the robbers will return to carry away, or bury, their dead. To remain here might be fatal to us. From some safe ambush these wretches would have no compunction in hurling their envenomed spears at us, even while we were performing this act of humanity towards their dead. Let us proceed."

Their march was now very pleasant, through cultivated patches of rice and maize; and, as they came near the village, they saw smaller plots or gardens, where rows of the tobacco plant, sweet potatoes, beans, and other vegetables were growing, while the banana trees hung over them with their pods of fruit. Behind the scattered huts which constituted the village was a grove of limes, citrons, and the cocoa-nut and rofia palms. Soon they heard the lowing of cattle, the chattering of domestic fowls, and the playful cries of children, which were music to the ears of the wanderers. Then they reached the lowly, wooden huts, before which, seated on the ground, were the women with the white lamba gracefully folded completely over their forms from neck to foot, industriously employed in weaving; and Mr. Sinclair, with tears in his eyes, lifted up his hands, and loudly praised God, who had at last brought them to the dwellings of peace.

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These people were dark in complexion, but well-formed, and of pleasing and intelligent countenance. They were neat in appearance, and active; they at once spread clean mats on the ground, under the trees, and invited the weary travellers to rest, while they went to prepare food for them. Soon after, they brought a bowl of smoking rice, on which were laid the limbs of a broiled fowl. They gathered fresh plantain leaves for plates, and produced thick bamboo canes, filled with a fiery sort of spirit, which they poured into cocoa-nut bowls, and offered to their guests; but when Mr. Sinclair emptied the bowl upon the ground, and asked for water, the women brought it, with smiles, from the river. They set before the strangers also honey and bowls of milk, and seemed to enjoy the pleasure of fulfilling the rites of hospitality.

After their repast, Ramarla had much serious conversation with the men, while Mr. Sinclair questioned the women about their occupations and mode of living. Tom and Mike, stretched on their mats, slept profoundly, but the two boys walked up to the work-women to observe the weaving. The women showed them the stately rofia palm, which grew near, and which, Mr. Sinclair had told them, was known scientifically as *Sagus ruffia*. A pile of the young leaflets, about three or four feet in length, lay beside the women. From these, some were employed in drawing out the inner fibre or thread, and uniting three or four of these threads together. These strips, without any twisting or preparation, are then tied to the frame, which is merely four short poles fixed in the ground, with rods across the two end poles about a yard in width. The threads are placed close to each other on the rods, and the women then weave across to and fro, and thus rudely form the cloth commonly used in the island, which, though rough and coarse, is strong and durable. Mr. Sinclair told the boys that, in some parts of the

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island where silk-worms are reared, the rich silk lambas of the chiefs are woven by the same simple apparatus.

The man whom they had first met now offered his house to the travellers, which he had already vacated for the hospitable purpose of appropriating it to them. It contained but one large room, in the midst of which was a fireplace of stone; but, as there was no chimney, the guests were glad to leave it during the cooking, to escape the smoke. A large common earthen pot for boiling rice, a wooden spit for roasting meat, some cocoa-nut bowls, and beautifully-woven rush baskets, were all the contents of the hut, except the mats which covered the floor, or were piled up for sleeping-places, and which were all clean and neat.

"Are these poor villagers really slaves, sir?" said Walter to Ramarla.

"I am ashamed to say, my dear boy," answered Ramarla, "that, according to the true meaning of the term, they are slaves. They are fed, clothed, and protected by the head of a family, and for these advantages are bound to render to that family certain services. Yet they look on their chief as a father, and he, if he have the spirit of benevolence, regards them as his children."

"They are then vassals, are they not, Mr. Sinclair?" asked Walter.

"Vassals," answered Mr. Sinclair, "as such slaves were termed in the feudal days; those days which people will persist in naming the 'good old times;' serfs, as they are called in Russia. But, however the condition of these dependents be masked, they ever were, and continue to be in reality, slaves; and true Christians believe that they have no right to deny to a class of their fellow-creatures the privilege of liberty —liberty of action, thought, and speech. Men, under the restriction of wholesome laws, should be all equally free, that their faculties and aspirations may have the

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opportunity of developing, to enable them to do good to others in this world, and to fit themselves for happiness in eternity."

"I am convinced you are right in the abstract, my judicious friend," answered Ramarla; "but my own case is beset with difficulties. I would not, for any consideration, sell one of these men. I have even offered them freedom; but they reject the boon, and weep at the thoughts of losing the plenty and the light labour which make their homes so happy."

"That is but the darkness of ignorance," said Mr. Sinclair, with a sigh. "Teach these people to appreciate the blessings of freedom, and they will desire it."

"But if they are happy, Mr. Sinclair," said Frank, "I don't see what occasion there is to open their eyes."

"It is a duty, Frank," answered he. "The Red Indian, exulting in the possession of the scalps torn ruthlessly from his enemy, is happy. Shall we not awake him from this delusion, and say, 'Come, and I will show you fairer things than these?'"

"You are right, my dear friend," said Ramarla. "I confidently hope the day is at hand when Christianity will be the religion of this land, and her humane institutions must follow. Be assured, if I be spared to see this happy change, I will be the first to make any private sacrifice to illustrate the great truth."

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CHAPTER XVI.

Again on the Road—The Alligators—Malagasy Canoes—Unexpected Visitors—A hasty Flight—A Gale at Sea—The barren Island—A Ship in Sight—Once more on the Ocean.

A FEW days' rest in this peaceful village was beneficial to the whole party. Ramarla was now able to stand, though yet unfit to walk; but Tom had found tools and wood among the people, and had formed a very tolerable pair of crutches, which were a great boon to the chief, and the wonder and admiration of his people, who thenceforward regarded Tom as the great man of his party.

Then Ramarla said, "My principal village lies also on this river, but a mile from the sea, and many of the people are occupied in fishing, and have boats. There we can finally arrange our plans, and thither our march will be easy, and I trust uninterrupted. A party of these good dependents will accompany us to transport the litter and the heavy packages, and I would even suggest that a second palanquin be made for you, my old friend, who cannot endure the fatigue of walking like these younger men."

But Mr. Sinclair protested against the palanquin, and they set out with a troop of attendants and abundant provision. They enjoyed the sight of the numerous herds of cattle feeding on the rich plains; they watched the wild ducks and the pretty purple kingfisher on the river, and occasionally paused to observe, with some alarm, monstrous alligators raising their frightful heads above the water, or from the shelter of the reeds which grew on the banks, and staring with greedy eyes on the men that were passing by and escaping from their jaws. The natives re-

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garded these monsters with superstitious awe; and though cattle, and too often men, fell victims to their voracity, would never attempt any hostile measures against the river tyrants.

"Them's the dogs," said Tom, "for making a meal of a poor fellow, when he never expects it. Your lions and tigers, Walter, are nothing to he; they let a chap have a chance for a fair fight; but he nips you in two before you can pipe out; and such a little midge as you he'd just bolt, and make no bones about it."

"And isn't that same painted in his ugly face?" said Mike. "Will we be taking a chop at his thick neck, Tom?"

"You'll shove off, and make sail, man," answered Tom. "A collier might as soon give battle to a Queen's ship. You'd be glad to show your heels when you'd got into the thick of it."

So the alligators were spared, but carefully shunned; even when in their least dangerous position, lying half torpid on the shore; and the travellers always encamped at a safe distance from the river, though they continued to make it their guide; and at the end of three days they saw, with joy, from the brow of a hill, the open sea, and a neat village lying a short distance from it. They were hospitably received at the fishing village, and their attendants were now dismissed with such small remembrances as their scanty means afforded; some old linen, cotton handkerchiefs, metal buttons, and above all, some drawings of animals made by Walter, which were highly valued, were all they had to offer, and these were gratefully received. Ramarla parted from his vassals with grief, but not without hope that brighter times might restore him to them; and now every thought was directed to the means of escaping from Madagascar.

"Have you seen our canoes?" said Ramarla, pointing out to Tom one that was under repair; "if we do not soon see a vessel from hence, we must sail in one

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of these to some quiet island at a distance from the coast, where we need have no fear of pursuit, and shall be conveniently placed for signalling a ship."

Tom looked with disgust and contempt at the rude canoe, which was hewn out of the trunk of a single tree, large and clumsy, and without outriggers. The sail, which was of coarse rofia cloth, was square, and extended between two masts, and the boat was provided with paddles.

"It's a queer craft," said the sailor; "and I'd not be he as would undertake to steer such a log. It's out of all nature; and if it floats, it's just a mercy, and none of man's doing."

Ramarla smiled and said,—"We shall be safe enough in one of these boats, my good man. The fishermen are well accustomed to them, and have been known in cases of need, to take them out to an amazing distance. If we were over the reefs, which are at once the plague and the defence of this coast, we should have little to fear in the short distance we propose to sail. But, first, Walter, we appoint you to look out for a vessel; we may succeed in signalling one, even from the coast."

Walter and Frank walked down towards the shore, where they mounted a tall palm-tree, and sat for hours looking out to sea for the distant ship they hoped to catch, but in vain; and reluctantly they turned homeward to report their ill success. As they drew near the hut which they inhabited, they saw with great alarm a long procession coming up to the village, consisting of many armed attendants, and bearers carrying an open palanquin, in which a man, plainly of some importance, was seated. With haste and caution they stole round and entered the hut to report the circumstance, and Ramarla, much startled, consulted with his friends on the expediency of immediately departing to escape any encounter with these unwelcome visitors. At this moment one of the most intelligent men of the village entered to announce that the

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stranger was Amforana, a chief officer of the family of Ramarla, who had come to the village to inspect the condition of the people, and to receive the usual tribute of cattle and grain; and the cautious slave desired to know if his master would wish his presence to be known.

"I know Amforana to be faithful; bring him here without delay," said Ramarla.

When the officer was introduced into the hut, he was speechless for a time, such was his astonishment at seeing his master, and also Mr. Sinclair, whom he recognized with great emotion as his teacher, and whom he believed had long before left the island.

"Then God has brought you back, my lord!" exclaimed he, "once more to be our ruler."

"What do you mean by these words?" asked Ramarla.

"Do you not know, my lord," answered he, "that our beloved young prince has succeeded in obtaining for you the permission to remain in the island, and even to practise your religion quietly; but you are positively forbidden to attempt making proselytes. All this his highness wrote to you, and sent off a vessel to the Mauritius to convey the despatch, and to bring you back with honour. It is most fortunate that I find you here; and yet I fear, as you have not left the island, you must have suffered many trials."

Ramarla explained to his attached servant the unfortunate circumstances that had retarded his escape, and the trouble and anxiety he had brought on his good friends who had transported him across the island.

"Yet they must not remain here, my lord," said Amforana; "the queen, after having your pardon extorted from her, will be doubly indignant at the intrusion of more professors of Christianity, or at the return of a teacher so offensive to her as good Mr. Sinclair. We must get them out of the country."

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Though grieved to be separated from his friends, Ramarla was too grateful for the permission to remain in his beloved country to hesitate in accepting it. "I may yet," he said, "by God's help, without obtrusive efforts, endeavour by my example to lure others to search after truth. I should only have retarded your escape, and I will yet hope, that in happier times, we may meet again."

"Unfortunately," said Amforana, "my followers are not all to be trusted; therefore, no time must be lost in removing these Christians, lest any reports reach the queen, which may injure you, my lord."

"Then let us depart at once," said Mr. Sinclair; "you have already suffered too much, my friend, for your consideration of me. The canoe will carry us to one of the islands, and there we may remain in safety till some passing vessel carry us off from this land of persecution."

"It is the only feasible plan," replied Ramarla; "but have you the means of obtaining a passage? I lost all my ready money in the ill-fated vessel, and except with this jewel I cannot aid you." He put into Mr Sinclair's hands a diamond brooch that fastened his lamba, and added, "If you were sure of going to the Mauritius I could give you an order on my banker; I can do no more, unless Amforana can assist us."

The officer produced a bag of the gold and silver coins of many nations, which had rather been preserved for curiosity or ornament than for use, and offered them.

"We have yet some money," said Frank. "We did not give the slave captain all we had. I believe we have nearly ten pounds."

"Neither Mike nor I have a rap," said Tom; "for that rogue holds our wages, and we may whistle for them—but what of that? It will be a queer ship that will not be thankful to get two stout hands like

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us, and to give free passage to the old master and these two small chaps into the bargain. No fear of being turned out, master."

"An' we could only be getting a sight of that same ship," added Mike.

"Well, keep close here for the present, my men," said Ramarla; "and you, Amforana, send the head man to me for orders, and despatch your followers up the country to look after the cattle, till we can get my friends quietly off."

In a few minutes all was arranged; the suspected men were sent far out of the way, the heavy canoe was stored with maize cakes, beans, rice, cooked beef, and several long, thick bamboos filled with fresh water. Every necessary that could be collected in haste was added to the heavy packages; and then all taking a sorrowful farewell of their noble benefactor, they embarked with sad hearts on an unknown sea. Two native men were employed to paddle the canoe out, and to bring it back; Tom and Mike looking on the whole proceedings with unqualified disapprobation and suspicion.

Mr. Sinclair learned from the men that they proposed to take the boat out to an island about twenty miles from the coast, which, though uninhabited, was well watered and fertile, and frequently visited by India vessels to obtain firewood and water. There it was hoped they might not long be detained; but at all events they had abundance of provision, and would be secure and comfortable. And the fisherman had orders to revisit the island at the end of ten days to ascertain whether they had effected their departure, and in case they were still delayed, to bring fresh supplies of food. The plan was unobjectionable, the relief from continued fear was very desirable, and after a short time they began to enjoy the fresh sea-breeze, and to rejoice as the land gradually faded from their eyes, and they looked round on numberless small

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rocky isles, all, as the men told them, barren, desolate, and haunted only by sea-birds.

But after they had been out little more than an hour, the air became sultry, the sky darkened, the lightning flashed, and the dreaded wind of the north monsoon arose and swept the little bark with irresistible power towards a little isle at the south. The fishermen in dismay said they must land, for the gale might increase; at any rate it would not subside for some hours, and they dared not venture farther out to sea. With great difficulty, dashed against reefs, and plunged among breakers, they were at last landed on a bare rocky strand. Nothing less solid than this log canoe could have withstood the dashing waves and sharp rocks; but the fishermen, accustomed to these gales, soon drew it ashore, unladed, and baled it out. Then while their passengers stood looking dismally at their piled luggage on the beach, and the barren prospect round them, the Malagasy, quite at home on these wild isles, pointed out a cave which would shelter them, and assisted to remove the lading to it, for the rain now fell in torrents.

In melancholy silence the party stood watching the storm for an hour, when a slight cessation induced the natives to launch their canoe, to return, as they assured Mr. Sinclair the gale would not permit them to make the island to which they had first proposed to go; but they promised to return in a day or two, if the weather was more favourable. Then they pointed out a high cliff above the cave, from which they might look out for ships, which, however, were rarely sailing north at this season.

"What better could be looked for from such a lubberly craft," said Tom, as they watched the men paddling off to the mainland. "If there had been a few trees on this here ugly rock, I'd engage, myself, to rig up a raft as would be more sea-worthy than yon heavy log. But who ever landed in such

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an unlikely port? God send us all safe afloat again!"

Mr. Sinclair was inclined to give the preference to the safety of *terra firma*, but he knew he could not convert Tom to that opinion; and as he thought employment would divert all from the contemplation of their irksome situation, he proposed that, as they might be probably detained some days, they should try to make their miserable abode more tolerable by cleansing it from its impurities, for it was unquestionable that it must have contained a large colony of bats and other filthy animals. While the two sailors were engaged in this duty, the boys climbed the cliffs to look round for a sail, which they did not discover, but returned with a hat filled with eggs. They lighted a fire, boiled the eggs in an earthen pipkin given them by the villagers, ate their supper, said their prayers, and made such arrangements for escaping the damp earth for a sleeping-place as their means afforded, and slept without a watch in a place where no danger from man or beast could be apprehended.

By daybreak the boys were again at the look-out, but returned disappointed to their cheerless retreat, in which they were compelled to seclude themselves through another day of rain and wind, looking out with vexation on the foaming sea which separated them on all sides from aid. Two more days of continued tempest followed; and deprived of all resources of employment or amusement, for the cave was too dark to allow them to read, they were all melancholy. Tom and Mike, then, regardless of the rain, had explored the island, which was scarcely a mile in circumference, and found it to be literally a rock, without vegetation, water, or even animal life, except the garrulous birds, which seemed inclined to dispute the possession of the island with the strangers by their indignant cries, flapping their wings, and other hostile indications. It was in returning from this expedition

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that Tom, in crossing along the cliffs, fixed his eyes on a distant speck, and pointed it out to Mike.

"Will it be a sail?" said Mike, breathless with agitation. "Musha! if the blessed sun would be showing his face to lend us a light! Arrah! but I'm seeing her now! will I run and fetch the master?"

"Run, and fetch forrard the glass, and the guns," answered Tom. "Let us get them nigh enough to hear, and then we'll hail them with a will."

The good news soon summoned the whole party to the cliff. The glass showed them a large vessel, under bare poles, striving against a north-east wind, which was driving it towards the island. No time was lost; signal guns were fired, a white flag set up, and in a few minutes it was plain the signals were noticed. An answering gun from the ship, and the sight of a boat put out, filled the hearts of the watchers with joy, and they blessed the humanity which disregarded the rough and dangerous sea at the call of distress."

"They're English, I'll be bound," said Tom. "Catch any chattering monkey of a forriner launching his boat in such a sea for a distress gun. God bless you, my hearties! I wish I were among you to bear a hand. Easy there! Hail them, Mike; warn them not to run foul of the reefs. Ay, ay! they're coming in north! All right! they've brought her through! Now, be smart, and have all down to stow;" and talking, in great excitement, as he went on, Tom was soon down on the shore to greet the strangers.

They were really English, and when Mr. Sinclair had explained the distressed situation in which he and his friends were placed, they were quite ready to take all on board; and it was not long before the happy party trod the deck of a large merchant vessel bound to Canton and Calcutta. The captain, on hearing their case, readily accepted the services of the two seamen for their passage, and refused to accept any payment for the rest until they reached Calcutta, as the name

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of Mr. Thornville's banker, which Walter remembered, was well known to him.

The gale had somewhat distressed the vessel, and driven it out of its course; therefore, Captain Wilson proposed now to touch at Sarawak, on private business, and to make some slight repairs in the ship. He thought it not improbable that some vessel bound direct for Calcutta might be in that harbour, in which case he would at once transfer his passengers to it. Mr. Sinclair sighed to think how he was thus cast about, far from his intended object; but Walter assured him his father would be delighted to welcome the preserver of his son, and would either protect him in India, or send him to England.

"It is a strange disorganization of my plans," said the good man; "but it is God's will, my dear boys, and I am content to submit to it."

"If it was not for my anxiety to see dear papa, and relieve his anxiety," said Walter, "I should so like to visit Borneo. The oran-outang, you know, Frank?"

"I don't think we shall be very likely to meet with the oran-outang at Sarawak," answered Frank; "but we may see Rajah Brooke, and that will please me more. I would rather see a hero than a monkey."

"You are right to call Sir James Brooke a hero, Frank," said Mr. Sinclair. "He is one of God's heroes; one whose memory will be honoured by posterity when he is reaping the fruits of his works in a happier world. He has devoted his wealth, his talents, his whole life, to the labour of diffusing civilization and Christianity among a savage race, and thus producing order and peace in a land of darkness and bloodshed. This is true heroism."

"Then, China, too, Mr. Sinclair," said Walter. "It would be very pleasant to have a peep into that land of wonders, to see the pagodas, the mandarins with the pigtails and the yellow buttons, and the women with the tiny little feet that they cannot walk with."

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"It's little enough ye'll see of all that, Master Walter," said Tom. "I've had a voyage to that queer country, and a close set of fellows they are. And then, their talk! it's not like any other Christian tongue: gabble, gabble, cheat cheat! that's their way; and a rum lot they are."

"The Chinese have had much intercourse with the English since you were there, Tom," said Mr. Sinclair; "and, I doubt not, if we are compelled to visit Canton, we shall see much to interest us."

CHAPTER XVII.

Captain Wilson—The Pleasures of voyaging—The Perils of the China Sea—Prahus in sight—A Typhoon—A Boat Voyage—A Rocky Island—Minna and her Parrot—Miss Griffin—A Cool Reception—The Grotto in the Rocks.

CAPTAIN WILSON explained to Mr. Sinclair that, but for untoward circumstances, he had hoped to be in Canton before this time; he had had great sickness among his crew, and had been compelled to put in at Algoa Bay, where he had been detained for some time, and had finally been obliged to leave three men behind, whose places he could not fill up there; since then he had lost four men by sickness, and the want of hands had retarded him. He was very glad to obtain the services of Tom and Mike; for his cargo was valuable, and the China Sea notoriously dangerous.

"But we are of quiet appearance," continued he, "and many circumstances concur to make me desirous to touch at Borneo. I have special business with the Rajah, and I am anxious to put my ship into condition; and if this disastrous gale abate, and I can get a few additional hands at Sarawak, I hope she will walk on briskly, and escape all dangers."

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"Have you any guns, sir?" asked Frank.

"We have two small carronades below, for we have little room on deck," answered he; "but we will get them up before we reach the sea of danger, and have all in due preparation."

Now for the first time Frank and Walter began to enjoy the pleasures of a voyage. In a neat, well-ordered ship, and kindly treated, they walked the decks with pleasure, and leaned over the bulwarks to look on the wonders of the ocean. They watched the ugly grey shark, with its cunning eye, abhorred by all seamen, and the dolphin, which, when caught and laid on deck, showed, in dying, such rapid changes of colour—now golden yellow, now brilliant green, blue, and every variety of tint; but chiefly valued by the crew as fresh meat.

And now Tom gave the boys practical lessons in seamanship, and even Walter was soon able to run up the shrouds, and to reach the top-gallant mast. Still striving against the contrary wind, they passed slowly round the north of Sumatra, in sight of the mountainous coast, and entered the Straits of Malacca, carefully watching for the sudden squalls which so often, in these straits, prove fatal to vessels, and still more carefully looking round for the prahus of the piratical Malays, which haunt the coast to the terror of unarmed ships.

"Captain Wilson, are those prahus that I see sailing after us?" asked Walter, in alarm.

"No, no, my good little fellow," answered he. "We can keep clear of yon chaps cleverly—they are only trees, torn up by Sumatra hurricanes, and floated down the rivers into the straits, which are full of them. Ugly customers they are for heedless fellows in a light boat; but we know them, and in a few days we shall be out of their way, and pass Singapore."

"But Tom says, Captain Wilson," said Walter, "that Singapore would be a much better place than Sarawak

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for you to repair and to seek hands. He says it is such a busy port."

"Ay, ay, busy it is," answered he; "a bit over busy for me just now. The loose hands there are generally rogues, and the people you deal with are cheats; besides, I've a cargo I'd not like to have overhauled at any port till we come into harbour at Canton; and above all, I have business with the Rajah. For all these reasons, I do not touch at Singapore, though I would have been glad to do so for your sake, for vessels for India are certain to be in; but I cannot afford to lose more time."

Mr. Sinclair could not but allow that Captain Wilson's excuses were reasonable, though it was to be lamented that the boys could not at once have been sent to Calcutta. And, after all, they ought to be too thankful for the assistance bestowed on them to feel any discontent that they had not obtained all their wishes. So, amidst the number of islands which are crowded here, they passed into the China Sea, still pursued by varying winds and the sudden gales of the season. A few days of entire calm did not make a desirable change, for provisions were scarce, and the water low and almost undrinkable; but they bore all without murmur when they thought that in a few days they must come in sight of the coast of Borneo.

But just as they hailed a distant view of their desired port, a still more unpropitious change took place in the weather, and a tempestuous south-west wind drove the vessel before it, far out of its course. For two days this gale continued; then in the evening, a sudden calm succeeded, and they once more saw land; but, bewildered in a maze of small islets, it was necessary to ascertain their exact position, and the chronometer and watches were brought up. But just at that moment a cry was heard, "The prahus! pirates!" All operations were arrested, and sail was crowded without delay, with the intention of escaping

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from a fleet of prahus, which were sailing out from among the most distant isles.

The men were yet busy in the shrouds, when the lightning flashed, the thunder pealed, and a whirlwind, such as is only felt in those seas, struck the devoted vessel, tore away the masts, and three unfortunate men, still engaged in their duty, were plunged with the wreck into the waves, now boiling up in mountains of foam. The disabled ship dashed onward, disdaining all control, and the men who remained thought only of preserving life a short time longer by clinging to the bulwarks, half suffocated with the sea that washed the decks, sweeping away all movables, amongst which Walter's little black parroquet perished. Still the vessel ran madly on, like some ungoverned steed, till a sudden and violent shock prostrated all the men, and, for a few minutes, each believed his last hour was arrived. Then Tom, springing up, called out, "We're aground, captain; we may save our lives yet!" Slowly and despondingly Captain Wilson was roused to action; the gale was dying away, but the sudden darkness of the tropics had come on, rendered more dense by the blackness of the heavens. As well as they could ascertain, the ship seemed to have been thrown on a bank or islet of sand, where it lay wholly immovable; the next care was to call over the names to discover who was missing, and fortunately all answered except the three poor men who were first swept away.

"Yon fellows will be upon us as soon as daylight comes, and we fast here," said Tom; and he pointed out an island, on which glimmering lights denoted inhabitants, and there could be no doubt who those inhabitants were.

"I had hoped," groaned Captain Wilson, "that the typhoon would have finished the villains."

"Bless you, sir," answered Tom, "them light craft floats like corks, in any weather; and, if they be

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capsized, them as is in them is never no worse. The rogues cannot drown, for, you see, they are sold to a master as helps them; but he'll pay them some day."

"Do not allude with levity to such wickedness, Tom," said Mr. Sinclair. "God knows we are all subject to evil influence, and should pray for strength against it. If these criminal men have been spared in the storm, let us hope that the mercy extended to them may induce them also to have mercy on their fellow-creatures."

"I'd like to see them have that," said Tom, "desperate rascals as they are. It's their trade, sir, and not a dog among them ever shuts up shop as long as he can hold a creese to cut down a Christian."

Mr. Sinclair shuddered, and asked Captain Wilson if anything could be done.

"We can do nothing," answered he, "till we have daylight. Then I would advise you, who care for your lives, to take a boat, and make what way you can. For me, if I cannot save my freight, I will take care they shall not have it. I shall fire the ship."

"Surely not, Captain Wilson," said Mr. Sinclair, hastily, "you would endanger your own life by such an act, besides committing wanton destruction of the valuable freight, which might do good to some."

"Never, Mr. Sinclair," was the reply. "It is a cargo to do evil to man, not good; the principal part is opium. I was persuaded, at the Cape, by the captain of a homeward-bound Indiaman—a man I had long known—to take in the opium, which circumstances had prevented him from carrying out himself. I leave you to judge if this pernicious weed be likely to benefit any one."

"This is God's judgment," said Mr. Sinclair. "Let us thank Him who has spared our lives, and pray for his direction."

After the earnest prayers of the dejected people, they remained some time in silence and meditation;

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then the flitting lights of the pirates again attracting the attention of Captain Wilson, he said to Tom and Mike, "You two men, make ready the long-boat stow in it all your own property; take biscuit and water, for it will not do to wait till daylight shows the robbers all our movements. Then, my friends, I beg you to embark, and row off to the first island likely to afford you a temporary shelter. I will remain here two hours longer. I remark that the water rises on the bank, and it may be that the old hulk may float beyond the sight of the pirates before day. In that case, do you show a signal, and I will try to take you up again; but, should I fail, have no fear. You will have no difficulty in working from island to island, till you reach the coast of Borneo. And if the full tide fail to move the ship, I and these four faithful men will take the jolly-boat, laden with what is most valuable, and, setting fire to the old craft, row after you. Be prepared, when you see the light, to look out for us. We must then either wait on some island for a ship, or manage with our boats as well as we can."

Mr. Sinclair remonstrated, the boys trembled, but Tom and Mike bustled about, laded the boat as they thought fit, and lowered it; then taking a sorrowful farewell of their kind and unfortunate friend, they rowed off blindly through the thick darkness of the sultry night.

"I'd like to get ahead of yon lighthouse, as those rogues have set up," said Tom, "before they get a sight of us. Pull away, Mike, and you, lads, keep a sharp look-out to see that we don't run foul of some reef. We could do with a few stars out, just that we might pick out a snug landing."

The stout rowers pulled the boat lightly over the now calm sea. They soon lost sight of the pirates' lights; but continued to row on through the darkness for two hours, when the moon gleamed for a minute or two through the black clouds, and disclosed to them

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a rocky wall which they had narrowly escaped, and they now carefully lay off.

"But," said Tom, "if the moon had only held on a bit longer, there's no saying but this same coast might have suited us. Here she comes again, God be thanked."

The waning moon broke again from the clouds, and they now plainly saw the grey rocky cliffs of an island, which they resolved, while the light lasted, to examine. They pulled completely round the little islet, which they calculated might be about six or eight miles in circumference, and began to believe it must be wholly inaccessible, as the perpendicular cliffs rose on every side directly from the sea to an immense height. At length they discovered a narrow creek, through which a river poured into the sea; with difficulty they worked the boat through the opening into the rock-bound river—a deep ravine, where neither tree nor bush cheered the solitude; all that could be seen was the dark water below and the blue sky above them.

There was something solemn in this remarkable scene, dimly revealed by the faint light of the moon among the thick clouds: but before the day broke, the clouds dispersed, and the cliffs through which the river ran became lower and hung with green garlands, but still too high to afford any glimpse of the country to the weary rowers. When they had wound about three miles from the sea, the banks of the river became accessible and thickly wooded, and now they resolved to land. They selected a spot where the roots of a mangrove which spread into the water were so entwined with creeping plants as to form a leafy arbour, into which they brought the boat, moored it to the roots of the tree, and leaving the lading untouched until they should have examined the island, they each took a gun, and ascended the banks, satisfied that they left their valuable boat in safe concealment.

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Nothing could be more beautiful than the scene that opened before them. Shut in by the surrounding rocks, up to which it gently sloped, the whole island seemed a rich valley, covered with fruit-trees laden with produce, on which thousands of lovely birds and sportive monkeys were feasting in full enjoyment. The green turf was a garden of rare and brilliant flowers, and even the trunks of the trees were covered with splendid and curious orchids. The early morning air was delicious; and, thus surrounded by the sea, the island had all the freshness of a temperate climate, amidst the gorgeous vegetation of the tropics.

"This is, indeed, an Eden on earth," said Mr. Sinclair. "God be praised, who has led us through danger and darkness to this charming sanctuary! I can scarcely fancy that these quiet groves have ever been desecrated by the footsteps of the heathen pirates."

"I'll not altogether say that, sir," answered Tom; "but you see it's bad to get at; first, the rocks at yon narrow creek overlap each other, and it's a chance anybody finds out an opening by daylight; then, none but a light boat like ours could have come up this here shallow river. Ay, ay, it's a fair harbour; what say you, masters, if we unlade and anchor here a bit till we hear of a chance? There's Captain Wilson now, as long as we were out at sea, it were safe he would stick to his ship. And then my mind misgives me, he'd never fire her. I fancy he'd get her off, and if he do, it's hardly to be looked for, that, crippled as she is, and the pirates at her heels, he'd go cruising about to pick us up."

Mr. Sinclair was startled at this suggestion, though he agreed that it was nevertheless rational; and he proposed that they should at once ascend from the low ground of the island to the cliffs which overhung the sea, where they might look for the ship they had abandoned. This was a walk of more than a mile; but they stopped to refresh themselves with large

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and delicious pine-apples, each plant of which had fruit on every branch. They gathered the leaves of the plantain to form a receptacle for the juice which flowed from each pine-apple as soon as it was opened, and enjoyed their novel banquet, but could see no traces of the ship. The edge of the cliff was clothed with a broad belt of tall trees, forming a shady and fragrant grove, and they were leisurely moving along, eating their fruit, when they were suddenly arrested by the sound of a human voice. The chattering of a parrot succeeded, and they concluded they had been deceived; but the next moment a sweet young voice was heard, saying, "Naughty Poll, say Minna, Minna!" At length the imitative bird caught the name, and repeated it. A merry laugh from the teacher dispelled all alarm, and the voyagers, emerging from a thicket, saw before them a pretty girl, apparently about twelve years old, dressed in the English fashion, with a large broad-brimmed hat, who was caressing a parrot.

The instant she saw the advancing party, terror gleamed in her eyes. She sprung up, and would have fled; but the boys came up and arrested her, and Walter, holding out his hand to her, said, "Oh, please, don't run away from us; we are so glad to see a dear English face, and hear English words again. Do stay with us?"

"Are you an English boy?" asked the little lady. "Have you a papa and mamma? Why did they let you come here? and why are your clothes so torn and shabby? Who are those big men? Are they pirates?"

"We have got away in a boat from the pirates," answered Walter, "and come here to hide ourselves from them, believing no one lived here. But it will take a long time to answer all your questions; and we would like to see your home."

"Then, come along all of you with me," said the lively little girl. "I like you and the other boy, and

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I think I shall like that nice old gentleman. But you must come to Miss Griffin and be examined;" and she laughed as she waved them to follow her.

The little stranger, with bounding steps, conducted them through the trees for a short distance, and turning the angle of a towering crag which hung over the sea, they saw, slowly pacing over the flowery turf, a tall middle-aged lady, stern and plain in countenance, wearing also a large broad-brimmed hat, which did not harmonize with her meagre, rigid face so well as with the youth and beauty of their first acquaintance. The lady held a white umbrella over her head, and was reading a large book. She started at the sight of the strangers, and said sharply,—

"Who are you? What would you have with us? We possess nothing that can gratify your greedy avarice. Depart and leave us in peace. Pursue your theft and murder on the seas till the judgment of God fall on your heads, and leave two helpless women unmolested. What does that impertinent villain find in my words to excite his laughter?"

"Sure, then, I'll be spaking the thruth altogether, my lady," said Mike, tittering. "Didn't I laugh to see your honour's figure-head? Isn't it a rale illigant caubeen? Sorra a betther did I iver set eyes on; and much good may it do ye, and kape the sun off yer ould ancient face."

"You are a low, ill-bred fellow," said she, angrily.

"Is it ill bred, ye mane?" said Mike, "and me can count my people back for hundreds of years; fine ould blood, and niver betther in all Munster, I'll uphold."

"Be silent, Mike," said Mr. Sinclair. Then addressing the lady he added, "You must pardon the freedom of this worthy Irishman, madam; it is the characteristic of his country, and he means no offence. May I assure you that you are entirely mistaken in suspecting us of any intention to injure you, or to intrude on you. We are voyagers, driven by misfortunes to

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seek shelter in this island, which we did not suspect contained inhabitants. But if, like you, they are of our own country, we shall not fear to cast ourselves on their hospitality."

"I do not know to whom you allude, sir," answered she. "I have reason to believe that my pupil, Miss Gayton, and myself, have been, till now, the sole inhabitants of this lonely spot. The ignorance and treachery of man placed us here to perish; but I am a woman of vast resources, and God has given me strength to accomplish much. I have, with my own hands, slain birds and cooked them."

"Yes, it was such fun," said the pupil. "Miss Griffin knocked the birds down with her umbrella; that was not fun: that made me cry, poor things! But we had to pull off the feathers, to cut them in two, and then to spit them on slips of bamboo, and set them up before a fire we had made; and after all I never tasted anything so burnt and nasty. I like eggs and cocoa-nuts, and mangosteins better. But now, Miss Griffin, these friends have walked a long way, and are all very tired. I will show them to our mansion, where they can rest, and have some breakfast with us."

"Allow me to speak, Miss Gayton," said the dignified lady. "I have not yet decided on such an important step. I must be further satisfied. These strangers may rest beneath the trees, and I will hear their story. You, sir, who seem to be the head of this extraordinary party, tell me who you are?"

Mr. Sinclair, to whom this peremptory inquiry was addressed, told his own sad tale of persecution and misery; how he met with the two school-boys, at whose adventure the lady's brow grew dark, and her lips were compressed; the kindness of the two seamen; the journey with Ramarla across Madagascar; and their most disastrous voyage, and escape from the pirates.

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"I pity you, sir," observed the lady. "You have had many sorrows, and do not seem to possess much strength of mind to rise above them. The boys are justly punished. They have been disobedient and criminal; and did circumstances permit it, I would myself lead them back to their injured schoolmaster. Miss Gayton, I cannot approve of your holding the hand of an insubordinate school-boy."

"Indeed, Miss Griffin," answered she, "he is very sorry for running away, and quite a good boy now I'm sure. And it will be so pleasant to have a playfellow again."

"A playfellow!" exclaimed Miss Griffin. "Understand this, Miss Gayton, that it would be wholly inconsistent with the conventional proprieties of your position in life, to enter into games of play with an unknown and illiterate school-boy."

"Pardon me, madam," answered Mr. Sinclair, "the father of Walter Thornville is a gentleman, well known and respected in Calcutta. You, who are accustomed to tuition, must be aware that a large amount of learning cannot be expected in a boy of thirteen years of age; but I am satisfied with Walter's attainments and disposition, and you may rely on it the young lady cannot learn evil, but may derive advantage from associating with him."

"I doubt the fact, sir," answered she. "That elegance of manner, so important to the young lady of a certain rank of life, must suffer from collision with the rudeness of school-boys. And the familiarity of these boys with common sailors is highly objectionable."

"Don't talk any more about it," said the wilful pupil. "We must have breakfast, Miss Griffin, and I invite all these strangers to my house. Come along, and see me boil the eggs and make the coffee; unluckily we have no bread."

"But we have plenty," said Frank. "I will run down to the boat for it while you are making break-

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fast; or, still better, here is Mike to undertake all that drudgery. He has been a cook."

Miss Griffin, imperious as her manner was, seemed afraid absolutely to oppose her youthful pupil; and she therefore, though somewhat ceremoniously, lifted up the pendent creeping plants, which formed a leafy curtain before an opening in the lofty cliffs, and requested the strangers to enter. Tom and Frank, however, only waited to mark the spot, and then set out for the boat, and Mike did not enter till he had run up a mango-tree, and brought down, not only a bag of fruit, but half a dozen young pigeons from the nest, which he speedily plucked and spitted, and lighting a fire outside the dwelling, put the birds down to roast.

In the mean time, Mr. Sinclair and Walter had followed Miss Griffin into a cave, which they found to be in fact a pleasant grotto, almost entirely open above, except for the tendrils and flowers that spread over and formed a screen from the rays of the sun, while wide fissures in the front, which overhung the sea, were also curtained with verdant shrubs. The floor was of fine sand, and some cushions were arranged around it, while a flat mass of stone in the midst served for a table, over which was thrown a handsome shawl as a cover. On the ledges of rock around were brilliant shells and elegant bouquets of rich tropical flowers in cocoa-nut bowls filled with wet sand, and a number of books gave the grotto a homely, domestic appearance.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Mike's cooking—Miss Griffin's Story—The Prejudices of a good Sailor—The consequences of neglecting Miss Griffin's advice—The Ladies abandon the Ship—The lonely Isle—The new Community—Miss Griffin, Dictator—An Exploring Expedition.

MINNA led Walter away into another cave, where a fire was burning, and pans, kettles, and crockery spread round showed it was used for a kitchen. Then she called Mike to show him the coffee-pot and the egg-boiler, and all the little requisites for cooking; and the man grinned with delight as he said, "This same is a natish galley, miss; and Mike Ryan will be the boy as will sarve ye gintalely."

"We have another cave for a sleeping-room," said Minna; "indeed, this is quite a mansion, but it was very dull before you came. Now I shall like it well enough, only I cannot help thinking of dear papa and mamma."

Tears filled the eyes of the tender little girl, and Walter shared her emotion as he said, "My dear papa, too, will be very unhappy about me, and the worst is, Minna, it is all my own fault. I suppose you couldn't help coming here."

"It was Miss Griffin who chose to come," said the volatile child, now covered with smiles. "Isn't she very odd, Walter? But she is very good and kind, and clever too; except about ships. I do think she is not very clever about managing a ship."

Mike laughed out at the idea of a woman managing a ship; but when he saw Walter look grave, he said, "Will I lay the cloth for breakfast, miss?"

It was Minna's turn to laugh now, as she replied,

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"We have no table linen; Miss Griffin forgot that; so we must just put out the cups and plates and spoons. Oh, I had forgotten the pigeons? See, Mike; we have knives and forks, too! But we must wait for Frank."

It was not long before Tom and Frank appeared, laden with a bag of biscuit, a cheese, and a ham, besides the portmanteau of clothes, which Walter had begged them to bring; for he felt hurt at Miss Griffin's allusion to their disorderly dress. The provisions were transferred to the kitchen, the portmanteau made a seat for Mr. Sinclair, and Mike then brought in the pigeons, the coffee with eggs beat up instead of cream, and biscuits; and no breakfast could have been more heartily enjoyed.

Then Mr. Sinclair politely requested to know what unfortunate circumstances had thrown two ladies into this strange solitude.

"A providential determination of my own," replied Miss Griffin, "brought us to this spot, thereby saving us from death or slavery. My life has not been one of idleness, Mr. Sinclair; and the knowledge I have attained by reading and observation has been of immense benefit to myself, and to all those about me who were not too obstinate to profit by my experience. But I will descend to details.

"The regiment which Colonel Gayton, the father of my beloved pupil, commanded, was some few years ago ordered to India. Mrs. Gayton accompanied her husband, and Minna was left to the care of her maternal grandmother. She unfortunately died about twelve months since, and the relatives then sought me out. I had at that time been just compelled, by adverse circumstances, to relinquish a school, over which I had honourably, though not profitably, presided for many years; and I therefore was at liberty to accept the office of preceptress to Miss Gayton until the will of her parents could be known; and when orders arrived

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in England that she should be sent out to India with her nurse and an accomplished governess, I consented to accompany her, and we embarked, in a handsome steam vessel, under auspicious circumstances.

"The captain was polite, if he was not opposed in his prejudices, and I soon discovered he was strongly opinionated. I quietly suggested some improvements in the arrangements and the discipline of the vessel: he rejected my counsel with little courtesy. When we entered the China Sea, I said to him that I knew the sea was notorious for piracy, and I therefore requested the engineer might put on more steam, that we might escape any sudden attack. The engineer very rudely inquired if I wished to be blown up; and the captain scoffed at the idea of an armed steamer being set on by pirates. He had better have taken my advice.

"In the mean time poor nurse was seized with a fever. I wished to prescribe for her, but the young surgeon of the ship interfered with my orders; the consequence of this was, that the poor woman died.—Do not weep, my child, she was a good Christian; and though I was not allowed to minister to her bodily ailments, I read and prayed with her. She died in peace, and passed from trial to blessedness.

"We had delayed till we fell in with the fatal hurricanes of this sea, which I always attribute to the neglect of my advice—our progress was too slow. One night a dreadful gale tore away the chimney of the vessel. Great confusion pervaded the decks; but I made my way to the engineer, and insisted on it that before it was too late he should put on more steam. I grieve to say that he replied in most offensive language, and Captain Templeton even took my arm to lead me to the cabin, saying that it was not a fit scene for me.

"The storm continued to rage, notwithstanding which, instead of getting up another chimney, they spent

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their time in taking down the sails, at great risk of human life. Again I spoke, and pointed out to Captain Templeton the prudence of letting down an anchor, to steady the rocking ship, and, would you believe it?—he refused."

"He would have lost both anchor and cable in such a gale, madam," said Frank.

"Permit me to observe, young gentleman," continued she, with some asperity, "that I thoroughly understand the subjects on which I speak. My knowledge of the theory of navigation is the result of study, actuated by the desire of communicating that knowledge to those of my own sex whom custom has so long left ignorant of the higher sciences. I could not induce Captain Templeton to entrust me with his chronometers, or I wished to teach Miss Gayton to take the longitude."

"Oh, I am so glad, Miss Griffin," said Minna, blushing. "It would not have been useful to me. I would rather learn Hindustani, that I might talk to the poor natives in India."

"Life is too short to attain all the knowledge we desire," said Mr. Sinclair; "and it is therefore wise to select such studies as can be turned to the greatest advantage to ourselves and others. But I cannot understand, Miss Griffin, how it happened that you two only escaped the storm."

"Hear me, Mr. Sinclair," answered the lady. "You are a man of judgment, and must allow that I was right. The fury of the tempest increased in the darkness of night; and when we ought to have been at anchor we were whirled, and tossed, and dashed, till a sudden shock threw the child and me prostrate in our cabin. I called out loudly to know the meaning of this violent concussion. 'Struck a rock, ma'am,' called out one of the sailors; 'but we're off again; it's all right.' But it was all wrong; for in the morning there was a great cry that we had sprung a leak.

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and instead of repairing the chimney all hands were called to the pumps. I suggested a plan of letting down a boat with the carpenter, that he might mend the hole on the outside; but, as usual, I was disregarded.

"After many hours of thought, I walked to the quarter-deck, and observing that the sea was greatly calmed, I asked Captain Templeton why we were not making sail. He answered, 'We have found anchorage, which is desirable, for our fires are out, our hands are at the pumps, and even when the leak is overcome, we are so crippled we must have time to refit before we can make any way; but be patient, madam, by God's help we shall get through all.'

"After a little more reflection, I determined on my plan. 'Captain Templeton,' said I, 'you have been paid handsomely for our passage; we have, therefore, a right to some privileges. I request you to put out a boat laden with such necessaries as may be required for our convenience and comfort, and land my pupil and myself on one of the islands I see. With the heavy responsibility I have undertaken, I cannot consent to remain in a sinking vessel.'

"'It is impossible,' he answered; 'I can spare no hands; besides, you have no servants to attend you.'

"'It will be a new phase in my varied life,' I said. 'I am contented to be without attendance, and I must insist on your compliance with my request. The nearest island will suffice, provided it be uninhabited; for I should prefer solitude to savage society.'

"I will not repeat to you the stormy contention that followed; but finally I triumphed. A boat was launched, I selected such stores as I thought necessary for a short sojourn, Captain Templeton faithfully promising, as soon as his ship should be in a sailing condition, to send out a boat for us. He would not agree that it was in any danger of being lost, so obstinate he was in his opinions. I took leave of him

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amicably, telling him I should prepare for the reception of him and the crew, when they were driven to abandon the unfortunate vessel; but my words seemed only to annoy him; we rowed off, and I could not but grieve that I had failed to convince him of his danger.

"The men rowed to this island as the nearest at hand. I strongly objected to its rocky and barren appearance, and ordered them to go on further; but in passing round the rocks, they discovered the almost hidden creek; and notwithstanding my orders and entreaties, they rowed up the river, and landed us as soon as it was practicable. One of the men brought all our baggage as far as the edge of this cliff, a locality I fixed on that we might have a view of the ship; and then, without affording us further assistance, he left us, saying all hands were needed at the pumps.

"We were left alone in this unknown land, which, from the absence of every trace of man's presence, I decided was uninhabited. So far we were safe; but even in a climate so delicious as this, it was necessary to have some shelter for our heads, and I rejoiced when my active little pupil happily discovered this grotto. I endeavoured, with much mental exertion, to recal to my memory all the treatises I had read on domestic economy; and with more physical labour than I had ever been accustomed to, I, aided by Minna, succeeded in rendering this cave habitable, and fitting it up with such utensils as I had prudently secured. We have suffered many privations, but not actual want. I have, by practice, learnt to prepare coffee; Minna robs the nests of the sea-birds on the cliffs of their eggs; and the fruits which are within our reach, or that we can obtain by shaking the trees, are abundant and wholesome. I brought a number of books, and we have pursued a course of study which will render our two months of solitude not wholly unprofitable."

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"But the steamer, madam; what became of it?" asked Frank.

"I had predicted its fate—the means I had not exactly foreseen," answered Miss Griffin. "As we watched it from the cliff on the day after our arrival, expecting every moment to see it disappear, we saw to our horror a vast number of small vessels come up and surround the steamer."

"There were fifteen—I counted them," said Minna.

"My impression is, my dear," said Miss Griffin, "that there must have been three times that number. They appeared to be covered with men whose arms we saw glittering in the sun. I listened with anxiety for the report of the guns, which I knew the ship had, though, contrary to my advice, they kept them in some out-of-the-way place below, instead of having them ready on deck. We never heard a gun fired, the pirates boarded the vessel; we heard only from the surrounding boats the yells which proclaimed their victory."

"They are called prahus, madam," said Frank.

"I think I have seen that name applied to these piratical vessels," continued Miss Griffin. "We saw them, after some time, row slowly from the steamer, probably laden with the plunder. Minna believed she saw the English crew carried off as prisoners; but I know the fiendish practice is to murder their opponents, and I doubt not but every man was slaughtered. We saw all the valuable contents of the ship taken away. My own poor possessions, and the chests of costly linen and dresses I had provided for my charge, are all now probably displayed on the persons of those vile robbers."

"I don't think, Miss Griffin," said Minna, "that any of the pirates could wear my best blue silk frock; and what use can they make of the crinoline petticoats and the white silk boots? Only think, Walter, of a savage in white silk boots!"

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"Do not laugh, thoughtless children," said she; "this is an affair of mourning; and should I be spared to reach a land of brave Christians, I will exert my utmost power to call on men to go forth and extirpate those murderers."

"Then what became of the poor ship, madam?" asked Walter.

"It is a mystery," answered she. "We watched the movements of the pirates till nightfall; and the next morning, when we looked out for the ship, the place was vacant. I am of opinion that it had gone down, as I foretold."

"The fate of our vessel is equally mysterious," said Mr. Sinclair. "We cannot see any traces of it, yet I cannot help indulging a hope that it has escaped; but should that be the case, any hope of it returning to rescue us seems improbable. We have the boat, certainly; but to make use of it in a sea swarming with pirates would be dangerous. I am at a loss on what to determine."

"Be tranquil," said Miss Griffin. "I have settled it all. You remain here; we will keep a sentinel on watch, and if we are not sought out, we may hail some passing vessel. We have abundant food, and freedom from danger. I will undertake to legislate for the little community, will promote improvement, and preserve order and peace, and I trust God will bless us."

"We must look round for another cave," said Walter; "and pray, madam, do you know the extent of the island?"

"We have never been farther from our abode than to the spot where we landed," said Miss Griffin; "but it would be desirable to send out an exploring expedition. I will think on it. In the mean time, look out for a cave: these cliffs are full of hollows; you will have no difficulty."

The boys and the two sailors set out, highly amused at the dictatorial tone of Miss Griffin, who had evi-

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dently constituted herself Queen of the island. They were soon followed by Minna, who seemed quietly to have a good deal of her own way, even with the despotic governess; and peeping through the bushes, or probing them with long sticks, they soon discovered a cave in the cliffs commodious enough for a habitation; and having by loud shouts roused and dispersed the bats that clung to the roof, they set to work to tear down the nests, and with brooms of brushwood to cleanse the cave. It did not, like Miss Griffin's grotto, run through the cliffs, and it was less light and airy; but this was a small objection in a climate where life might be passed almost entirely in the open air.

After they had sufficiently admired their dwelling, they walked down to their landing-place, and brought on shore all the lading of the boat, including not only their own private property, but a few cooking utensils, a small chest of tools, some beef, a bag of salt, and a small quantity of tea and sugar. They also removed rugs, cloaks, the sails and oars, and more effectually concealed the boat by weaving brushwood and more creeping-plants between the roots of the mangrove—thus forming a snug boat-house. Then they piled stones and bushes over the place on which they had landed, that no one else might be tempted to follow their example, and returned to transfer their heavy loads to the cave.

Mr. Sinclair and Miss Griffin had in the mean time arranged their mode of living, and divided the duties of instruction satisfactorily; and when Miss Griffin showed some uneasiness at the absence of her pupil, Mr. Sinclair pleaded for a holiday on this day of their first acquaintance.

"Miss Gayton was immoderately indulged by her grandmamma," said her governess, "and suffered to play with her boy cousins; and even in my instructions from Colonel Gayton, I was entreated to waive

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all strict discipline till after the voyage. I am not altogether satisfied with the plan, and feel that, especially during the two months we have been here, her education has been wholly neglected; and she is remarkably independent for a child of only twelve years of age—an alarming symptom."

Though Mr. Sinclair did not quite agree with the lady, he was silent; and was not sorry when the boys called on them to see their new abode, with which Miss Griffin, having altered every arrangement they had made, declared her satisfaction. She then arranged that the grotto must be the general mess-room; and the young men set out, climbed trees, and collected cocoa-nuts, oranges, eggs, and more pigeons, and Mike cooked the dinner, which was approved by the ruler of the feast, who even condescended to converse affably with the two sailors, to direct their occupations, and to correct their errors of speech.

The new cave was not a pleasant resting-place, and all were glad to quit it for the open air early in the morning. They walked up the river higher than their landing-place, to refresh themselves with a bath; and here the shallower water so abounded with fish, that Walter's fishing-hook and bamboo-rods were soon in use. A quantity of beautiful fish, something like trout, were caught, which Mike broiled for breakfast, an attention graciously received by Miss Griffin.

"Now, young gentlemen," said she, "you and your two domestics must set out to explore the island, and report on its extent, security, and productions."

"Tom is not our servant, Miss Griffin," said Walter. "He was mate in the *Amelia*, where he was very kind to Frank and me, and he has taken care of us ever since we knew him."

"As long as I live," said Frank, "Tom and Mike shall be my friends, not my servants."

"The boys are right, my dear madam," said Mr. Sinclair. "The obligations they owe to these worthy

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young men can never be cancelled. The least they can do is to look on them as equals; and truly, madam, I consider that, in our small community, dependent as we are on each other for comfort, we cannot afford distinctions of rank."

"But the danger of the precedent, Mr. Sinclair!" exclaimed she.

"No fear of danger, madam," answered he, smiling. "If God mercifully permit us to return to society, we shall all subside into our several stations. I, who have been the patron and ruler of these young people, shall then be only a schoolmaster, not the familiar equal of Walter Thornville and Minna Gayton."

Miss Griffin did not like to feel that she could make a mistake, and she did not like to hear that her sovereignty was but temporary. She therefore dropped the subject.

CHAPTER XIX.

Coasting the Island—The Lake and its Inhabitants—The Mountains—A Pic-nic—The Fairy Bower—Mike's Lion—The Vagaries of the Wanderoo—The Baboon Army—A grand Conflict.

THE expedition party were all prepared, and took leave of the reluctant Minna, who was left to her lessons and the society of Miss Griffin and Mr. Sinclair. Tom advised that they should first "coast" the island; and with guns on their shoulders, and bags for any spoil they could find, they set out to follow the rocky boundary, often stopping to look wistfully over that sea which imprisoned them. The rich vegetation of the island continued unchanged; fruits of various kinds—the banana, the delicious orange, green and ripe,

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mingled with the fragrant flowers of the tree, and the unequalled mangostein, were abundant. Every tree was alive with the chattering of green parroquets, bright scarlet lories, pert little monkeys, or cooing turtles; sometimes some gorgeous unknown bird, startled by the voices of the intruders, whirred over their heads, and they paused to admire it.

"I am quite sure," said Walter, "that bright little creature, with the bare long feathers hanging from its tail, must be the bird of paradise. It is exactly like the pictures. Hark! the cry is like that of the starling. See, there is the whole flock! How beautiful they are! Their whole plumage is like a glory of purple and green-and-gold. I should like to have one; but a shot would shiver it to pieces."

"Them bits of birds are good for nothing for eating," said Tom; "now, a turkey or a goose would come in handy. Halloo! here's a grand piece of water!"

In a little hollow below them was a lake, around the reedy banks of which were gathered birds of various kinds, and of brilliant plumage. The rose-coloured pelican was wheeling heavily round above the water, and darting on the fish; the tall scarlet flamingoes bending their long necks, and plunging their curved beaks into the mud for the grubs and insects; the greedy fisher heron, poised on one leg, watching for the unwary fish; the majestic snowy swan sailing about, queen of the waters, regardless of the waders and divers that thronged round her, while the kingfisher and many smaller birds were skimming over the lake, intent on the insects, or smaller fry of fishes.

Deafened with the Babel of varied cries, the men went up to the side of the lake, where they could easily have filled their bags; but Tom recommended that they should not load themselves so early in the day; and Walter was reluctantly torn from the banks where he was lost in admiration of the pale lilies and other

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aquatic plants, and the brilliant fishes which were darting about.

"But do stop one minute, Frank," said he, "that I may look at those beautiful, disagreeable creatures, the water serpents. How terrible their forked tongues are!"

Walter talked of the swimming snakes and floating flowers, till the flowers springing beneath his feet attracted him still more—the curious, many-flowered stephanotis, the fragrant gardenia, and the richly-scented jasmine; and their progress would have been slow if Tom had not warned them that much remained to be done. They were tempted, however, by seeing the light gleam through, to descend into a deep cave, or tunnel, which perforated the cliffs, and opened towards the sea, on which not a sail was to be seen. While the sailors were looking out, Walter was examining the sides of the damp cavern, which were stuck over with small nests of a white, clayey appearance; he took down one, which contained two small pink eggs, and was so much struck with the extraordinary nature of it, that he proposed to bring Mr. Sinclair some day to visit this curious aviary.

They had now walked more than four miles, and from the position of the sun, judged that they must be nearly opposite the place from whence they set out; and they had not yet met with man, nor with any quadruped but the monkeys, which were numerous. They rested and dined; but on making their way along the north-east, they found that the cliffs spread into mountains, which, when they climbed, they saw covered the breadth of a mile. These mountains were broken in form, alternately rising to great height, and sinking into deep hollows and narrow crevices, dangerous and difficult to explore.

"I like our own side of the island the best," said Walter. "There is something so savage and mysterious about these rocks piled on rocks, that I should never feel safe amongst them."

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"I'd rather be here," said Frank. "There's nothing I should like better than a range among these crags and woods. We might have a chance of finding better game there than parrots and pigeons."

"But we've let the day slip through our hands, master," said Tom; "and we must put on more sail, or we shall be benighted among these black rocks."

"But we cannot show with empty bags, Tom," answered Frank. "What would our high and mighty Queen say?"

"We must steer for this side of that sheet of water," said Tom, "where we can shoot a few birds, and Walter can make up a bag of fish."

"Oh, no," said Walter; "I could not fish amongst those detestable snakes, and we have fish in the river,—that reminds me, Tom, how shall we cross the river, to go quite round the island?"

"Why, bless your heart, boy," answered Tom, "all rivers has a beginning, and that's often a bit of a spring. Its like enough when we come to it, we may step cross it; and as we've been sent out, we'd better make an end of the survey, and take all the soundings."

When they went up to the side of the lake, Frank, the best shot, proposed to shoot a lot of ducks; but Mike said,—

"Will ye plase, Master Frank, when ye are doing, to be shooting a big roast goose? It's niver worth while to be wasting powther on common poulthry. Sure, it's a roast goose is the prince of all birds and bastes, it is!"

Mike's geese were really swans; and Frank shot a fine cygnet, besides four ducks, while Mike filled his bag with their eggs; and then, more slowly, they continued to walk, keeping within a hundred yards of the base of the mountains, till a thick belt of bamboo announced that they had reached the river, which, though not narrow enough to step over, they found no difficulty in crossing. It flowed in a clear, bright rill

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from the mountains, and Walter longed to pause at the banks to watch the kingfisher, with its glittering plumage, as, perched at its ease on a low bush, it sought its daily food.

But they had now obtained ample provision, and the day was nearly over; so they continued to skirt the mountains, till they gradually became lower as the island rounded off to the south; but no break in the lofty cliffs appeared, except the mouth of the river, where they had entered the island.

Having thus surveyed the whole boundary, they passed up the bank of the river, till they were able to recross it; and then, heartily wearied, returned home with their spoil.

"Oh, how dull I have been without you!" cried Minna; "and now, Miss Griffin, remember that as Tom says he is quite sure there are no savages in the island, I mean to go on the next expedition. I have some nice walking-boots, far more useful than those of white silk, which the little savage girls are now wearing, and I can walk a great way. I used to run about all day long with Cousin Tom, and Cousin Dick, when I lived with dear grandmamma; I shall never be tired, I know."

"You have, then, Mr. Frank Freeman," said Miss Griffin, "nothing to report that threatens to disturb our tranquillity by land or by sea."

"Certainly not, madam," answered he. "The sea is as smooth and unfrequented as if it were the Frozen Ocean. The island is full of riches, and we might spend a long life here, and be in no danger of famine; it only wants a little variety. I don't see how we can fall in with any adventure, or any stirring accident to break the dulness. You remember, Minna, even Robinson Crusoe had his goats to chase; but here, the ducks are so easy to shoot, and the fish are so ready to bite, that there is not a bit of excitement in the sport."

"Have study and the pursuit of knowledge, then, no

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charms for you, young man?" said Miss Griffin sternly. "I fear, indeed, that your truant expedition originated in a thorough love of idleness."

"I hate idleness, madam," answered he; "but I love a change of occupation. Study is well enough in school-hours, but after that, I like sport with a purpose. Here is Wally, now, quite happy to spend his play-hours in watching a bird build its nest; but I must have my limbs in motion, and my mind engaged about some active pursuit."

"Then I regret to pronounce," said Miss Griffin, "that you will never attain distinction. The man who can be content to run about all day with a gun in his hand and a partridge or a hare in his head, is a mere machine in society. The mighty men of past ages were readers and thinkers."

Frank turned away mortified and offended; for he was no dunce, or mere sportsman, and Mr. Sinclair took up his defence, but failed to convince Miss Griffin that her judgment was unfair. She was satisfied, however, next morning, when the boys resumed their studies, while she was also engaged with Minna, and Tom and Mike performed the domestic duties, and brought in supplies when needed.

In these pursuits passed a fortnight, and though occasionally a sail was observed at a very great distance, not even the prahus of the pirates were ever seen near. Thus closely brought in contact, the heart of Miss Griffin softened towards the strangers. She respected Mr. Sinclair, permitted him to share in the instruction of Minna, and even transferred to him the office of conducting the daily devotions. She became really attached to the two boys, and tolerated the familiarity of the sailors; and now happily united as one family, the young people petitioned for a day's holiday, to make an excursion to the mountains, and have a pic-nic in the woods; and, as the distance was not very far, Miss Griffin not only gave her consent, but

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declared that Mr. Sinclair and herself would join the party.

The rainy season was gone by; there was nothing to cloud the prospect of the happy friends; the men took their guns, biscuits, eggs, and roast pigeons, and fruit was to be had wherever they turned. They set out early, to avoid the scorching heat of the midday, and after a walk of three miles along the banks of the river, reached the base of the wood-covered mountains, and slowly walked along to the lake, which, with its noisy inhabitants, amused them for some time, till the heat induced them to ascend the lower range of hills, to search for a shady noonday retreat. They found a tiny green glade, surrounded by shrubs of spicy odour, and trees laden with fruit, where every footstep crushed the lovely flowers only seen in the conservatory in England, and where the dense foliage formed a perpetual twilight—cool, fresh, and fragrant.

"How charming!" said Minna. "It is a fairy bower. Here we may dine and talk and slumber. Oh! Miss Griffin, what a sweet place this would be to live in! Tom, could not you and Mike build a hut here?"

"Will I cut the turf now, off-hand?" cried Mike eagerly. "Sure, Mike Ryan's the boy to rare a nate cabin. Will I bring clay from the lake, my lady, and hearth-stones? and maybe your ladyship would be liking a chimley—seeing that same's the fashion with the English. Och! musha! if we were only having the pig and the cow, wouldn't I be draming I was carried away to Munsther, altogether?"

"You had better not be hasty, Mike," said Mr. Sinclair. "This is a plan that will require some consideration."

"It requires no consideration," said Miss Griffin. "To erect a house would be tacitly to resign ourselves to remain permanently on the island. Such is not my intention; it would be at once contrary to my own inclination, and inconsistent with my pledge to

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Colonel Gayton. I hope soon to leave; I have been delayed much longer than I wished, but the means of departing were not in my power. Now, Mr. Sinclair is willing that we should avail ourselves of the boat, and as soon as he is satisfied that Captain Wilson is no longer in these seas, he has agreed that we should sail."

"But where shall we go?" asked Minna, in terror.

"I propose that we should direct our course to Borneo," said Miss Griffin, "and there appeal to the philanthropic Rajah Brooke. From the opinion that Mr. Sinclair has formed of our present position, he thinks that the boat could not carry us safely farther than the northern extremity of Borneo, the stronghold of the pirates. I differ with him. I believe we may sail safely to Sarawak, or if we prefer it, cross the sea to Singapore. I have examined the boat myself, and find it capacious, well built, and quite sound. Mr. Mate, I ask you; is it not perfectly seaworthy?"

"Ay, ay," grumbled Tom, "she's fair enough at a pinch; but she'll walk slowly with a fleet of them flying prahus at her heels."

But this discussion was, for the present, delayed; for all hands were engaged in spreading the repast. Frank had brought down ripe oranges from the trees, and Tom cocoa-nuts, and Mike had climbed a mango tree for some fruit, but without completing his task, he descended in haste and dismay, declaring that he had seen a young lion in the tree. Minna screamed, and Miss Griffin said, "It is impossible; a lion could not possibly swim from the continent to this island, nor, even suppose it to have been brought to the shore, could it have climbed these terrible cliffs. The man labours under a delusion."

"Besides, you know, Mr. Sinclair," said Walter, "that lions do not perch in trees; it must surely be a monkey."

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"Doubtless it is," replied Mr. Sinclair, "and I suspect I know the species; but I will go myself to look at this wonderful creature."

"I also think it my duty," added Miss Griffin, "to ascertain the truth of this vague report. I will follow you." And taking up her umbrella as a defensive weapon, she accompanied the rest to the mango-tree, where they found Frank making ready to shoot the animal, whatever it might be.

"Wait a little, my boy," said Mr. Sinclair, "let us first ascertain that there is really any animal in the tree. Then what it is; and whether there be any necessity to destroy it."

"Is it in the three, then?" said Mike. "Sure, and wasn't I seeing him with my own blessed eyes? And wasn't his face all as one as the sign of the 'Blue Lion' at Cork city, barrin' it wasn't blue at all, only black, and long fine white hair, and his mane and long beard, and his big teeth grinning at me; and the moral of Miss, he was?"

Minna burst into a merry laugh.

"Sure it was the fine hair was like hers," said he, "and not the big teeth, nor the beard, by no means."

Tom had in the meantime cut a long, stout bamboo, intending, as he said, "to stir him up a bit," and he proceeded to shake and beat the tree, till a grim, frightful face peeped through the leaves. It was of unspeakable ugliness; perfectly black, with long white hair falling on each side of its ponderous cheeks, and a beard of the same colour sweeping over its chest.

"It's more like an old nigger than Miss there," said Tom, "if it wasn't for the tail."

The tail was a very long and very active tail, tufted at the end, like that of the lion, and was used to lash the branches, to express the anger of the animal at the sight of the strange visitors.

"Do not be alarmed, Minna," said Mr. Sinclair; "this creature is not dangerous if left unmolested. I

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wish you would not interfere with his free possession of this mango-tree, my boys. We can obtain fruit sufficient for our necessity without disturbing him."

"Musha! master," said Mike, "isn't the rogue listening to every word ye're saying, and he mocking us for a pack of polthroons; and that's thrue for me, that didn't show fight like a hero?"

"How I should like to have a full view of the creature," said Walter, as he and Minna, hand-in-hand, walked up beneath the tree to try to look through the branches. In a moment the animal dropped down upon the shoulders of the boy, snatched off Minna's hat, placed it on its own head, and with great swiftness and agility sprung up the tree and regained its perch; from which it gravely looked down on the dismayed faces below. They all, notwithstanding the alarm, were convulsed with laughter: for it was impossible to resist the ludicrous sight of the solemn, wigged face in the pretty hat, with its gay ribbon-streamers.

"What shall I do without my hat?" cried Minna.

"We will sew you one of palm leaves," said Walter.

"But I'll try first to have a struggle for our rights," said Frank, snatching up the bamboo, and climbing the tree; but before he had reached the marauder, it had seized the branch of an adjacent tree and sprang to it, and from thence leaping from tree to tree, it was soon lost to the vexed pursuers.

"I do wish, sir, you had allowed me to shoot him," said Frank, vexed and mortified at his unsuccessful adventure.

"No, no," said Minna, "I would rather lose my hat, than have had the amusing creature killed. And, perhaps, Frank, if you had only wounded him, he might have fallen upon you with his great sharp teeth."

"You are right, my dear," said Mr. Sinclair, "for though harmless if undisturbed, the *Wanderoo monkey*,

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as it is called, might prove a formidable antagonist. But now, had we not better return to our table, lest some of the wanderoo fraternity should make free with our dinner."

The dinner was safe, and they could still enjoy it, though they were a little annoyed by the vexatious frolics of the monkey.

Then a palm-leaf hat was made for Minna, which afforded them a little amusement, and after a short rest they proceeded to explore still farther the recesses of the mountains.

They rambled through the delightful shades, collecting the bright flowers and eating the luscious fruits, and as they entered some new green glen, the younger party planned fanciful homes; cottages and gardens were to be made; even the mischievous wanderoo was to be tolerated; they proposed to tame him, and employ him as a servant like the chimpanzee of Philip Quarll.

The young sailors then proceeded to climb a cliff so high that it must command a view of the sea on the east of the island, which they had not yet seen. The rest of the party followed slowly along the lower ground. Frank, however, soon threw down his bag and gun, intending to climb after his friends; but was arrested by a scream from Miss Griffin, who, with Mr. Sinclair and the children, was at some distance behind him; he caught up his gun and ran back to the rest, who were standing appalled at the sound of strange cries, and as he saw, when he looked round, at the sight of a swarm of hideous baboons. These frightful beasts were perched on the branches of several trees around, uttering the most discordant yells, while their vindictive threatening gestures were so alarming, that Frank was not astonished to see Miss Griffin lying on the ground in a fainting fit.

Mr. Sinclair and Minna were endeavouring to recover the fainting woman, that they might escape,

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and Frank, thinking he could disperse the ugly animals, fired into one of the trees. A loud scream was heard, and one of the baboons leaped from the tree holding the dead body of her young one killed by the shot. The next minute all the troop had descended, and with loud chattering and yelling had drawn up in a line; a fierce body to contend against.

"Load your gun, Frank," cried Mr. Sinclair; "but do not fire again till they offer hostility; where are the other men? God be thanked Miss Griffin is recovering, and we may then be able to retreat."

But while Miss Griffin, but half-conscious, was gazing wildly round her, a huge beast, the leader of the troop, bounded forward, seized Minna, and in a moment had placed her in the clutches of the bereaved mother, as if to compensate for her loss. Frank and Walter ran forward to rescue the terrified girl from the female baboon, which, as she was still encumbered with the dead young one, was not difficult; but while Walter was holding Minna with one hand, the ferocious leader of the animals snatched his gun from him, and was raising it to strike him down, but in the attempt his claw caught the trigger, the piece went off, and shot the female through the head. She fell with a dismal shriek, and her destroyer, in terror, flung away the gun and took to flight, but a shot from Frank laid him dead by the side of the female, and the rest of the animals with horrible cries scrambled up the mountains and were soon out of sight.

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CHAPTER XX.

A new Alarm—Beating a Retreat—The Landing of the Enemy The fruitless Search — Capturing the Sentinels — The hasty Embarkation—The Dyak Pilots—A Promise of Security.

"LET us fly at once!" shrieked Miss Griffin. "Oh, let us leave this horrible island! I cannot remain a day now, when I know it to be haunted by these monsters. Are you sure they are dead, my dear heroic boys?"

"Quite done for, madam," said Frank; "and I think we've given the rest of the fellows such a fright they'll not come here again in a hurry."

Just then Mike and Tom came up in a state of great agitation, which the boys attributed to their hearing the guns.

"What set you on to blaze away with your guns that way," asked Tom. "There's nothing for it now but clearing the decks and piping to quarters; for they've spied us out, and they'll board us whether we will or not. We're short-handed; but them as cannot fight must run."

"What is the meaning of your alarm, Tom?" said Mr. Sinclair. "To what new dangers do you allude?"

"Och! Master Frank," said Mike. "Would you be the boy as gave the rogues that same nate signal?"

"Speak, men! are the pirates at hand?" asked Miss Griffin.

"And sure, my lady," answered he, "it's the word of thruth ye're speaking; the spalpeens were minding that same gun. Musha! musha! Tom, where will we be stowing these poor faymale women?"

It was indeed a thought that occurred to all, that the stowing of the "faymale women," as Mike called

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them, would be the greatest difficulty, when Tom fully explained the nature of the dilemma. It seemed that the two men had reached the heights and discovered two prahus beneath the cliffs, evidently bent on some piratical expedition, for the men were dressed in scarlet, and armed with the musket as well as the spear and creese.

"I got a good look at their craft," continued Tom, as after collecting all the traces of their visit, they hurried homeward; "and queerly rigged they are, stem and stern alike; but the weather-side bulging out, and the lee-side flat, with an outrigger weighted down to keep them from capsizing. A gallery ran round the bends where the rowers were sitting, and above all was a flat roof where the fighting-men stood, and where, my fancy is, they had a small gun. I reckon these would be their first-rates. They were making north when your first unlucky shot was heard, rattling among the mountains like a broadside of thirty guns. They lay on their oars and looked up, and we could hear a deal of chatter go on. Then came the second clatter, and the third, and in a twinkling, never wasting time to wear round, they shifted, and headed from the stern, rowing back the way they came, to make for the creek, no manner of doubt, and land on the island; and a sharp search they'll make, depend on't, for there could be no mistake when they heard the guns talk. What think you, Master Walter? You've not a bad head for a bit of contriving."

"Well, then, Tom, I think," answered he, "that we must hide Mr. Sinclair with Miss Griffin and Minna in one of the caves, and then we four will take our guns and get into those thick mango-trees, where we can hear and see all, and be ready to defend ourselves if we are found out."

"Ay, ay, my little hero," said Mike; "and av they be takin' to bird-nesting in them same threes,

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won't they be finding a nest of illigant singing birds; and we'll be sharp, boys, and take the ould madam, and miss, and the masther, and wall them up in their cabin nately, till sorra a soul can iver get in or out."

To be walled up seemed an alarming prospect for the intended prisoners, and a formidable undertaking for the workmen; but no safer project could be devised, and as soon as they reached the spot all hands were at work. The weak party were hurried into the grotto with the provision remaining, and reluctantly submitted to see stone heaped on stone before the opening till it was filled up. Then the men trimmed the shrubs to fall naturally over their work, and the entrance was effectually concealed. Their next task was to close the second cave, which contained much valuable property, Walter watching over the cliff while the rest worked. By the time they had concluded, Walter reported that he had seen the two prahus turn into the creek; and no time was lost in selecting two very thick lofty mangoes, close to the caves. Tom and Walter mounted one, and Frank and Mike the other, without any fear of detection,—for the dense foliage of one of these wide-spreading trees would have effectually concealed a dozen men; and the strong boughs afforded them a convenient resting-place, where they waited anxiously for the dreaded visitors.

"Oh, Tom," said Walter, "what will become of us if they find our boat and carry it off?"

"Not a bit of fear on't, my boy," said Tom. "They'll never get anything like so high up with them broad craft and their outriggers. All I'm 'feard on is, that they set a watch here, for you see they can have no manner of doubt as how there are hands aboard this slip of land, or how could the guns have been worked?"

"Hark! Tom, I hear voices and a rustling of the branches. Do let us pray to God to help us," said Walter.

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"Ay, ay, Master Walter," answered the man. "I were never much given to that till you put it into my mind; and it is a comfort I know now. And there's Mike, he isn't half that hard as he used to be, now when he hears tell, night and morning, of holy things, and considers as how he will have to reckon up his log at the last. Ay, ay, pray God send us help that them poor things as is shut up yonder, mayn't fall into the hands of such sharks."

"They will find the baboons that we shot," said Walter, "and that will prove to them that there must be men on the island."

"Ay, and guns too," answered Tom; "and them's what they're looking after. They'd hardly have put back just to cut our throats. Now, can you make out aught?"

"Yes; I see two men who have come up the cliff," answered Walter, "but far lower than our landing-place, thank God! What a hard scramble they must have had to get up there. Now more are coming. Oh, Tom! how many there are! We should have no chance if they found us!"

"Not a bit; I know that, youngster," replied Tom. "But you keep your eyes and ears open, and your mouth shut, and we're safe enough."

In a short time about fifty men had ascended and spread about till one man, who seemed to be the chief, mustered them in a line, and then drafted them off in parties of twelve to the different sides of the island. One of the parties, beginning at the river, explored the cliffs in which the caves were situated, to the great terror of the watchers. This was increased by their hearing the voice of Minna's parrot, which Mr. Sinclair had persuaded her to leave outside lest its chattering should betray their retreat. The faithful bird had, however, chosen for its perch a tree close to the entrance of the cave; and at the sight of the strangers began to cry out. "Halloo! what d'ye

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want? Tom! Tom! Mike! Come to dinner! Minna! Minna! Here they are!" and many other short sentences which it had acquired from its several teachers.

Though the pirates were doubtless unacquainted with English, they could not mistake the words for the natural notes of the bird, but recognized them as the language of man. They listened for a short time, and then, in the Malay tongue, which Walter understood, declared they must now be on the right scent. They retraced their steps and searched with more care, but fortunately with no more success, and continued for some time to examine the rocks and thickets. Then two of the men returned to rest beneath the very tree where Tom and Walter were hidden, while the rest continued the search along the cliffs.

"They cannot have got off, unless they had wings," said one of the men.

"But do you think they were really guns we heard?" said the other. "There are often strange noises in these rocks and mountains."

"That's true," was the reply; "but the bird never learnt that gabble in the woods. Depend on it, men have been here, and are here in some hole; for no boat could have got off since we heard the guns, and we not meet it. What can they be doing here?"

"Maybe, they may be of our own trade," said the other.

"But where are their prahus, then?" replied the companion.

"No matter; we are sure to know all about them soon."

The hours passed tediously and painfully to the men in the trees, as the two pirates wandered about, but still returned to their first station; but their alarm was much increased when one of the men said he was thirsty, and must get some fruit. He even attempted

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to climb the tall straight trunk of the mango; but, not being so active as the English sailors, he relinquished the task, and contented himself with throwing stones to bring down the fruit, to the great peril of the human inhabitants, and the consternation of the green pigeons and scarlet parrots, which flew out with great noise and clamour, and thus happily diverted the attention of the pirates from any movement that might have been extorted from the hidden men in their very awkward position, who happily escaped all injury from the missiles, and were glad to see their assailants plentifully supplied with fallen fruit, and eating it quietly.

At length the exploring parties began to drop in, all with the same report: nothing had been discovered. It did not seem even that they had found the dead baboons; and when all were assembled, the two commanders of the prahus held a consultation, within the hearing of the concealed men, on their further proceedings. Both agreed that they must no longer delay their departure, as some important scheme of plunder was in progress; but one of them wished to abandon the unimportant search altogether, and the other asserted that the island was available, at all events, for the purposes of storing their plunder, and detaining their slaves till they could conveniently dispose of them.

"No need of locks, bars, and chains here," continued he. "Here we have a strong prison, already provisioned. I propose that we should leave a force here to keep possession."

To this proposal his colleague objected; fighting-men could not be spared, and it would be inconvenient to leave any of the rowers, who were, as the listeners heard, all slaves. After some discussion, it was agreed that two of these slaves should be left for a day or two, when the pirates expected to return flushed with victory, and rich with spoil.

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Two men were selected, and instructed to shoot down the first man they saw appear; and then with many bitter curses for the time they had wasted, the pirates disappeared over the cliffs, and the plashing of their oars soon assured the anxious listeners that they had left the island. For some time longer they held their breath to listen to the conversation of the two men left behind, who murmured loudly at the injustice of being abandoned on this lonely spot, and deprived of their legal share of the plunder to be taken; for it seemed even the slaves were allowed some portion of the ill-gotten spoil, to bind them more effectually to their vile employers.

"And besides that," continued one of the men, "I don't like this place at all. They were no guns we heard, depend on it. Whoever heard such sounds as those from one gun, and what could they be firing volleys here for? Then did you mark the strange talk of that bird? I tell you this is one of those unlucky places haunted by evil spirits, and we shall never be taken off it living."

"It's not good to talk that way," answered his companion; "you know our father, the good Rajah, told us there were no unlucky places, and that praying to God would always drive away evil spirits. But since we were enslaved by these tyrants, they laugh at prayers, and have made us as bad as they are themselves."

The men were silent, and Walter whispered, "How glad I am, Tom, that they are partly Christians. Don't you think we might get down?"

"Wait, my boy," answered Tom, "they'd shoot us down before we'd time to speak. We'll have to be quiet a bit."

In a short time the men proposed to seek for some food, and rambled off towards the lake; then all the refugees descended at once from their leafy nests, and, in the first place, removed the stones, cautiously and

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quietly, and released the prisoners, leaving the opening, that they might all retreat to the cave, if necessary. Then they reported all that they had seen and heard to the emancipated captives, and discussed a plan for their escape,—for immediate decision was expedient. The voices of the returning guards arrested their discussion, and drove them into the cave, and through the leafy curtain they saw the men come up to their first resting-place with a pair of ducks, which they plucked and spitted on a bamboo, made a fire, and put them down to roast. The impatient watchers chafed at the delay till the repast was cooked and eaten; but, after that, they gladly saw the men stretch themselves beneath the tree to sleep; and it was not long before their loud breathing announced the soundness of their slumbers.

Then Tom and Mike undertook to capture them without assistance. They stole quietly behind the tree, and gently removed the guns which were leaning against it, and which were given to the boys to be conveyed into the cave. Then, each selecting his man, seized and pinioned his arms, while the boys removed the creese from his belt. It was now Mr. Sinclair's turn to come forward, and he addressed the men in their own language, assuring them that no harm was intended towards them; but that it could not be permitted to them to carry arms for the purpose of injuring harmless strangers. "We are about to quit this island," continued he, "where we have found a temporary refuge; you must not attempt to annoy or impede us, or we must keep you bound as prisoners. I am grieved to find that men who have had the advantages of hearing the truth, of knowing that a God who loves peace and harmony, is continually watching over them, should become the associates of blood-stained robbers, and be led into those wicked courses which must destroy soul and body."

Mr. Sinclair then proceeded to declare to the unfor-

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tunate men the eternal blessings promised to the redeemed children of God, and the fearful doom of obstinate sinners. And the poor slaves trembled, and told him their sad story: that they had been torn from their own people in Borneo, and enslaved by the pirates. They added that they would also gladly escape to their own country, but knew not how to accomplish it; for, if detected, they should be killed on the spot. They readily promised not to offer any resistance, but even to assist the flight of their captors; and, after some consultation, they were released, but carefully watched, while measures were taken for immediate embarkation.

"We can no longer hesitate," said Mr. Sinclair; "the wretches may return at any moment. The sea is doubtless perilous; but in this island we cannot remain, when it is to be transformed into a storehouse of plunder. We must sail; but, my dear friends, whither shall we go?"

"My resolution is formed," said Miss Griffin, "and I am convinced it is the only right decision. We must sail at once to Sarawak, and throw ourselves on the hospitality of Rajah Brooke."

"Throw ourselves into the thick of the pirates, you may as well say, mistress!" exclaimed Tom. "Don't you see, we'd have to hug the shore, for we have no chance of navigating the boat in the open sea; and that there shore swarms with the rogues! Just ask them fellows, Mr. Sinclair; I'll bide by what they tell you."

Mr. Sinclair did make the inquiry, and the men protested, with horror, that it would be certain death to coast to Sarawak in a single, unarmed boat. They recommended the east coast as less dangerous, and supplicated that they might be allowed to join the party, undertaking to pilot the boat safely through the islands of the Archipelago, and to a snug, quiet haven on the north-east coast, where they, themselves could

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land, and proceed to their own country; and if the strangers would trust and accompany them, they engaged to conduct them over the mountains to Sarawak. But the idea of committing herself to the mercy of these piratical Dyaks was repugnant to Miss Griffin; she declared it would be absolute madness, and, moreover, she protested that Miss Gayton and she could not possibly walk across mountains.

"Then we must hoist you on our shoulders, madam," said Tom; "here's Miss is a feather-weight; the boys can carry her easy enough; you'll be over fourteen stone, I reckon, but Mike and I can stand that."

Miss Griffin was highly indignant at the proposal, and at the absurd imputation on her light figure; but seeing that the preparations were going on, and that she must concede, or be abandoned on this pirate-infested island, she smothered her resentment till the moment when some untoward event should give her an opportunity of exulting in the confirmation of her sagacity. The Dyaks were useful assistants, all was rapidly transferred to the boats; a final survey from the cliffs showed the sea clear, and the fugitives embarked, with their new adherents, and the parrot, which Minna would not leave behind. The sails were spread, they ran swiftly down the river, and once more they were afloat on that sea which had proved so unfortunate to them all. They soon lost sight of their own rocky isle, but a hundred little specks denoted other islands, which they were careful to shun. They directed their course to the south-east, occasionally alarmed by the sight of a distant prahu, which warned them to lower their sails, and then they thankfully accepted the assistance of the Dyaks in the laborious task of rowing the heavily-laden boat.

They had taken care to bring the water-cask filled, all the biscuit they had remaining, a quantity of fish hastily caught and cooked, and some oranges and mangoes; and from time to time they took refresh-

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ment to enable them to continue their arduous duties. Night fell, yet they scarcely relaxed their efforts, though they were compelled to watch with more care; but the light of the stars enabled them to avoid rocks and islands; and they slept by turns till morning showed them the way they had made. A distant line was pointed out by the elder Dyak as the north-east extremity of Borneo, which, he declared, they must keep clear of, for the pirates that lurk about the cape were the Illanuns, foes equally to the Malukus and the Dyaks, and who would not hesitate to murder the whole party.

"But shall we be in less danger if we land lower down the coast?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"I have told you," answered the man, sullenly, "that the narrow bay into which I shall pilot you is not frequented by the pirates. I have pledged myself to land you safely. I will do it. I will even conduct you to a country of peaceful people, if you do not suspect me of treachery. I am honest."

Mr. Sinclair was silenced, but not perfectly comfortable; and Miss Griffin, who did not understand what was said, darted on the men such unmistakeable glances of suspicion, that it was no wonder that their indignation was roused.

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CHAPTER XXI.

A Dangerous Gale—A Feud among the Crew—The Quiet Bay—The Danger to Mike's Head—The Love-offering—Walter's Advice—The Voyage up the River—The Bore—Total Destitution—The Pirates' Fortress.

BUT now the real dangers of the voyage commenced. Prahus were continually seen, either single or in fleets, which the pilots contrived to avoid; and even the sailors submitted to their guidance, as the experienced men carried the boat through straits which could barely be passed, sometimes grating over coral reefs, which Minna and Walter thought they could have touched, as they hung over the gunwale to watch them; while, sometimes drawn up close to some little isle, the boat lay hid for half an hour beneath some drooping mango, at which times Poll was threatened with death if she spoke; and, indeed, the poor bird suffered too much from the voyage to have much spirit for chattering. Those who were not rowers lost all knowledge of their course, and even felt little interest about it; so entirely were they whirled about and directed by the Dyaks.

"Don't be afraid," said Walter to Minna. "I'm quite sure the men are earnest, or they would not take such trouble to save us from the pirates. I like Sunudeen, though he is so surly. Bujong, the younger man, is quiet, but he looks rather sly."

"But it is very terrible, Walter," answered she, "to be always in fear. Don't you wish we were safe on land again?"

"We shall have more to fear on land," said Frank. "There will be wild men and wild beasts, rough

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mountains and deep rivers; the labour of walking and the anxiety for provision,—all much worse than playing at bo-peep with the prahus, on a smooth sea, and with plenty to eat."

"But the sea may not always keep smooth, Frank," replied Walter. "I have seen Tom for some time looking hard at yon small cloud in the horizon. Only think, if we were to have a gale while we are in this little boat."

In a short time the murmur of the distant wind reached the ears of the anxious listeners before they felt the effects. The small cloud was succeeded by many clouds, which spread rapidly over the sky, and obscured the sun. The smooth sea swelled into waves, the boat was tossed, and too plainly the gale from the north was at hand. They took in the sails as speedily as possible, but not before they were rent into shreds by the wind which now raised the waves to a height which, every moment, threatened destruction to the overladen boat.

"Put us on shore anywhere, I insist on it," shrieked Miss Griffin. "The water is coming into the boat; it is up to my ankles. I am certain we have sprung a leak."

"No, no, Miss Griffin," said Walter. "It is only the waves which are dashing over the bows. We will bale out the water."

"I see no bows," cried she. "I am convinced there must be a leak. Why do not the men pull to the shore, which I now see plainly on the right hand?"

"We should be dashed to pieces on the reefs," replied Tom. "She is beyond management now. We'd better lighten her. We can cast these traps overboard."

"Not our carpet-bags, young man!" exclaimed Miss Griffin. "I will not hear of such a thing. What would become of us without our clothes?"

"Is it the gowns and the caps, my lady?" said Mike.

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"Sure, then, it's little of that same we'll be nading, iv'ry sowl of us, av the gale houlds on another hour. Sorra a shave will we be wanting when Sunday comes, niver a one, and that's some comfort, Miss."

But another hour did pass, and the stout boat still lived on that foaming sea which dashed over the bows, as it dived and rose over the mountainous waves. Frank and Walter were employed to bale, relieved by Mr. Sinclair, and even by Miss Griffin, though still, in frantic terror, she continued to denounce the disobedience of the crew.

"Believe me, dear madam," said Mr. Sinclair, "we are not now in the hands of man, but of God. It is He alone that can order the event, though we are bound to use such means as are lawful to endeavour to save our lives. Remember, also, that life is as precious to these poor men as to you, or to me; and it is their interest, as well as their duty, to use such efforts as their superior knowledge of our position convinces them may avail. It seems the gale has driven us too near to this rock-bound coast, as the grating of the boat must more than once have assured you, and they try to hold off the shore, to escape destruction."

"Try to shoot into the bay," cried out Bujong, to his companion, in his own language.

When Tom was made acquainted with this order, he seemed mystified, looking on the rocky coast; and Mike seized the arm of the young Dyak with some violence; pointing to the rocks, and vainly endeavouring to explain the danger of approach.

"Will ye be makin' him sinsible of it, sir?" said he to Mr. Sinclair. "Will that be his forrin seamanship, the lubber! to be running his boat on the reefs altogether. I'm wonderin' ye'll not spake, Mate."

A smothered feud existed between Mike and Bujong, originating in the practical jokes of the volatile Irishman, who had chucked the biscuit out of the Dyak's hand, tripped him up with the oars, and

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played many sailors' tricks, which were not understood by the irritable stranger; and the present interference seemed to increase his anger. He glanced wrathfully at the offender, and, in his own language, muttered abuse and threats with astonishing rapidity. Mike understood the nature of these mutterings, and retaliated by a volley of imprecations in the Irish tongue, which startled and silenced his opponent, who readily distinguished this was not the language used by the rest of the strangers; and he now regarded Mike with a keen and curious earnestness.

"Will he be anyways learned in rale Irish, think ye, Mr. Frank?" asked Mike. "Did ye mark how sharp he was striking his colours, when he heard me spake that same?"

"No, no, Mike," said Frank. "He watches you because he has not forgotten the affront you gave him. You must take care not to offend him farther, for he is very irritable. It would distress Mr. Sinclair much, if we were to have squabbles in the midst of our distress; and see! you were wrong to distrust him, —how cleverly he and his companion have brought the boat through the narrow opening into this bay, which is almost smooth. Now, thank God, we may consider ourselves out of danger for the present."

The small secluded bay into which the Dyaks had piloted the boat, was truly a haven in their extreme peril. The entrance was so narrow that nothing broader than their own boat could have passed, and even that had grated against the rocky sides. High cliffs surrounded the bay, from which the noisy gulls screamed, but failed to annoy the relieved voyagers, who now leisurely baled out their half-filled boat, and the night having come on, drew up to a hem of strand, too narrow to land upon, where beneath the over-hanging boughs of a mangrove they gladly moored the boat.

Miss Griffin imperiously insisted on landing; but

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Mr. Sinclair showed her the impossibility of accomplishing her desire, beneath these cliffs; and the men ingeniously contrived to erect a sort of tent in the boat with the oars and tattered sails, in which she and Minna, stretched on bags and boxes, might obtain some rest. After such refreshment as they had left, and such thanksgiving to God as their miraculous deliverance demanded, at Mr. Sinclair's request, a watch was kept up during the night, not only from fear of the pirates, but also from a vague suspicion of the honesty of the Dyaks, which he could not forbear entertaining; this enabled the rest to sleep soundly, and all continued tranquil during the night. The morning rose clear and calm, and they had the good fortune to find the roots of the mangrove clustered over with fine oysters, an agreeable addition to the dry biscuits, which with a few oranges, were all the provisions they had remaining.

As they were engaged in their usual morning devotions, Mr. Sinclair observed that the Dyaks attended impatiently, and when concluded, he said to them, "Now my good men we are ready to commence our voyage again, if the sea be calm." The Dyaks, without answer, took up their oars and rowed across the bay to a broken part of the cliff, where it was possible to effect a landing.

"Here we must leave the boat," said Sunudeen; then looking with contempt at the innumerable packages of Miss Griffin, he added, "Who shall carry these up the cliffs?"

"Carry them!" repeated Miss Griffin. "Surely this rugged desert is not to be our permanent landing-place."

Mr. Sinclair looked sternly at the man. He had seen a map of Borneo, and he said, "I know that many rivers which issue from the mountains fall into the sea along this coast; most of them will be navigable to some distance for a boat no larger than ours.

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We might thus make a good way inland without the great fatigue of a land journey—I must request you therefore, to pilot us to one of these rivers."

"They are unsafe; there the prahus of the pirates resort," answered Sunudeen, moodily.

"Surely not in every river," said Mr. Sinclair. "Hitherto God has protected us from those wicked men, and I trust we may still escape. Remember, my good man, we have rescued you from slavery; this is our own boat, and we expect you will now assist us; for we shall certainly not land here."

Sunudeen folded his arms and stood immoveable; but Bujong took up his oars and flung them into the water. Mike, who was watching him, sprung in after them, and being a good diver and swimmer, soon recovered them, swam back to the boat, and, as he stepped in, gave Bujong a smart blow across the shoulders with one of the oars. The man, with a furious cry, drew a knife, rushed on Mike, and would have stabbed him, had not the elder man held him back with his powerful arm, saying,—"Fool; would you ruin yourself and me? If you attempt that again it is your own head I will carry to the maiden!"

Miss Griffin shrieked, Minna trembled, and tears of distress stood in the eyes of Walter; while Mr. Sinclair said to Sunudeen, that it was indeed time to land his companion, since the lives of his protectors were not respected.

"I will take care he shall not harm the man," answered the Dyak. "He is mad because he has never secured a head to hang in his house, and he cannot win the maiden whom he loves until he can offer her at least one head."

"What a barbarous custom!" exclaimed Mr. Sinclair. "And have you, also, Sunudeen, been guilty of such savage cruelty? Surely your excellent ruler, Rajah Brooke, must have shown you the wickedness of such a practice."

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"I am not one of the Dyaks of the *Tuan Besar*, answered Sunudeen. "I have seen and heard him talk when I was at Kuching; but his own people take heads as their fathers did. Our maidens would not believe a man to be brave who could show them no heads hanging to his roof. If you should come to my house you would see many, for I am a great warrior. And these pirate villains, that you now wish us to encounter; why should we not take their heads? They are Malay strangers; they invade us in our homes, and spare no one."

To the ignorant Dyak, reared amidst the terrors of slavery or death, threatened even by those of his own land, and proud of every conquest over his foes, it was vain to preach the doctrine of peace and forgiveness, unless the foundation had been laid in the knowledge of Christianity. The tribes of Borneo, like the clans of Scotland in past days, were constantly at war with each other; the spear, or the creese, was the toy of the child and the pride of the man, and vain was the hope of establishing peace in a land where every man's hand was against his brother. Mr. Sinclair sighed over the stupendous difficulties that still lay before the great philanthropist, Sir James Brooke.

"But what a noble aim is his," said he to Miss Griffin; "and what glorious results may be expected if he should succeed in reducing to civilization the wild natives of this wide and fertile land, where nature has showered her gifts in a healthy climate, a rich and fruitful soil, numerous and unfailing rivers, abundant fruits, spices and gums, valuable mines, and, to delight the naturalist, every variety of animal and vegetable creation." Mr. Sinclair continued to say, that though he felt averse to retain the vindictive Bujong, he considered it would be inhuman to abandon him alone in that solitary spot, and he felt assured that Sunudeen would not consent to it. He, therefore, contented himself with ordering Tom and Mike to take the oars,

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and their skill soon brought the boat out of the harbour, and safely through the reefs; then, creeping as close to the shore as the rocky coast permitted, they continued to row vigorously towards the south, relieved occasionally by Frank. At length, though with evident reluctance, the sullen Sunudeen took up an oar to assist; but Bujong continued to sit moodily in the stern, watching the party with a keen and angry look, which was far from pleasant. It was only when they were approaching the mouth of a large river, which formed a sort of bay, that he started up, and pointing towards it, said, with a laugh of derision, "There, there—go, go!"

Mr. Sinclair appealed to Sunudeen, who said, "Yon river swarms with the prahus and forts of the Malukus, who would seize all, men and women, for slaves. If we would escape them, we must make further out to sea, that we may pass unobserved."

There was so much sincerity about the Dyak, that no one hesitated to believe him; the sails which had been hoisted to catch the north wind were lowered, and they rowed out so far as to become a mere speck from the shore; then rounding again towards the coast, they continued to row; occasionally when all seemed safe, hoisting the sail, till fatigue and darkness induced them to make to the shore, and at the entrance of a narrow creek they again moored the boat, ate their dry morsel silently, and slept with weary limbs and sad hearts.

Frank and Tom awoke with the sun, and clinging to the rocky bush-covered sides of the deep, rushing, narrow river, they deliberated on the practicability of working the boat up, in hopes of finding some hospitable spot where they might find shelter and food, and the means of crossing the country. They summoned Walter to the council, for though he was not strong enough to be a useful workman, he was much respected by Tom, who said he was "uncommon long-headed."

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"I should say, Tom," said the boy, "that the sooner we land the better; for the island is narrowest to the north, and the farther we sail south, the longer will be our land journey. Then it is such an advantage if we can make a good bit of way boating; for there's Miss Griffin and Minna cannot walk well, and just look at all their luggage: how are we to haul it along? And this river does not look as if it could be a pirate harbour, for one of those prahus with the outrigger could only just pass up."

"Ay, Walter, my boy, there's sense in that," answered Tom; "you see, we'll have it all to make up among ourselves, for Sunudeen, he's turned stupid; and that young fellow would like nothing better than to get us into a trap. He's just a tiger on two legs, and I'm not over fond of the way he keeps his eye on our figure-heads; thinking how they'll look when he has shaved them off, and cured them to hang up, a scoundrel!"

"He shan't have my head without a fight for it," said Frank; "but, now that it's light, Tom, let us look at that reef we missed so narrowly as we came into the river last night. Walter thinks it was not a coral reef."

They returned to the boat, from whence they looked down on the reef, or rocky ledge which lay at the mouth of the river. It certainly was not of coral formation; and the tide being low, Tom stepped out upon it, though not without exclamations against the sharp, rough surface; and he soon discovered, to his astonishment, that the reef was entirely composed of oysters, wedged into a compact mass, mouth upwards; and he called out to Mike to bring an axe, or any iron tool, that they might dig out a breakfast from this gigantic oyster-bed.

This was no easy task; but at length their united efforts separated as many as they required, on which they breakfasted; and after the curious had sufficiently

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examined the reef, Tom proposed the resolution to ascend the river. Sunudeen appeared surprised, and looked significantly at Bujong; but did not seem so reluctant as he had been at the river they had avoided, and Mike received the order with a grin of exultation. But rowing up the river was a heavy toil, though, as the course was somewhat south-west, they were aided by the north-east wind which now came very briskly, and to catch which they spread a sail. To this bodily toil was added the mental uneasiness of a constant watchfulness, lest they should encounter a prahu, or be surprised by pirates on the high rocky banks. But after rowing two hours on the still narrow, and rushing stream, they felt an impulse which assured them the tide was rising, and while they were congratulating themselves on this desirable relief to their labours, a loud noise startled them, and Walter cried out,—

"Oh, Tom, look round! the sea is coming after us! we shall be drowned! what must we do?

Tom glanced round, and saw to his horror a huge mass of water, like a solid wall, pursuing the boat at railway speed. No time was to be lost, they were not more than a yard from the bank at their left hand. Frank dragged the trembling Walter to the sloping bush-covered banks; Tom and Mike lifted out Miss Griffin and Minna, and the rest had merely time to scramble among the bushes, when the waters rushed over them, and it was only by clinging firmly to the roots of a mangrove, that they escaped being swept away, and overwhelmed in the resistless, roaring, dashing, foaming waves.

Panting and half-senseless they retained their hold for a few minutes till the waters gradually subsided, and they could believe they were actually on land. Tom first recovered his speech, and said,—"Ay, I've heard the Malays at Singapore tell of these, *bores* they call them. You see it's when the spring-tide rises higher than common, and when it pours in,

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forces the fresh water back in that mass. God be praised we're clear on 't."

At that moment a loud cry of "Ou, lads! up the bank!—sharp!" was heard, and all turned their eyes on the immense hideous head of an alligator raised from the waters, holding in its mouth one of the oars.

"Couldn't we have got our oar, Tom?" said Walter, piteously, as they all scrambled up the banks out of the reach of the dangerous, but sluggish, monster.

"It's little use we'd be makin' of that same oar, if we were getting it," said Mike, "seeing we have niver nothing to row with it. Sure, Master Walter, mavourneen, wouldn't you be sinsible as it was the boat was capsized, and isn't it takin' its divarsion out yonder. And isn't it thrue altogether that all our ownings, and the ould lady's caps and cloaks, will all be filling the jaws of that awsome baste; and by the powers, it's ourselves he would have swallowed into the bargain."

"Surely, Tom," said Frank, "we may recover the boat; the rising tide is in our favour, or it would have drifted down by this time."

"All right, Mr. Frank," answered he; "but there's little sense in running your ship into the breakers. We ought to have our own again, but you see yon fellow, how he's snapped our oar; now, one would hardly like to run one's leg into his mouth."

"Couldn't we dispatch him," said Frank, who had fortunately had his gun slung across his back, and thus saved it.

"Not on any account," said Mr. Sinclair; "it might be the means of rousing a nest of pirates against us.

But Sunudeen and Mike ended the difficulty. They dived together into the river, and rose suddenly behind the alligator; the Dyak sprung upon its back, and Mike attacked him at the side, both plunging their knives into his eyes, on which the monster gave

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a horrible roar, turned on its back, and floated down the river.

Then the men swam after the boat, caught, and righted it, and brought it to the bank. Tom and Mike recovered a pair of floating oars, but everything else was lost; and, after they had baled out the water with their hats, the disconsolate voyagers entered the boat again, destitute of every convenience, and even of every necessary for the support of life.

"But, after all," said Mr. Sinclair, "let us thank God; we still have our lives, and our boat to enable us to reach some spot where we may find aid."

"And we have our knives and cartridges, and I have my gun," said Frank.

"And I have my fishing-book in my pocket," said Walter; "and see here, Minna, my dear old railway rug has got hooked round the root of the mangrove. We must dry it for a bed for Miss Griffin and you."

But Miss Griffin was mute under the extent of her misery; without clothes, food, books, or even the common utensils of the table—she bent under her misfortunes. What was she now—her "occupation o'er!"

"Don't be distressed, dear Miss Griffin," said Minna. "I rather like it. We have the large cloaks round us in which we slept; and, do look! here is dear Poll, whose wings have saved her, flying back to her mistress."

The pretty parrot, half mad with joy to meet its friends again, made the air ring with cries of "How d'ye do?" "Minna!" "Minna!" "Here we go!" till Sunudeen growled out, "You had better muzzle the bird, or we shall soon have the spears raining on us."

So Poll was covered up with the railway rug; and then silently and slowly, for they were faint for want of food, they made their way through the deep-cut cliffs, which were at once a protection from observation and a barrier against escape. Suddenly strange sounds

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reached their ears; it was too late to turn back, they redoubled their efforts to pull on, and soon distinguished the barbarous and discordant music of gongs and tom-toms, which assured them they must be near an establishment of pirates. Sunudeen pointed to the left bank, and whispered that they must keep close to it; and the music, the loud voices and songs of the men in their fortress, and the shrill chattering of the women, served to drown the sound of the oars, which were used as lightly as possible.

They soon came upon a canoe, moored at the foot of the cliff. Sunudeen speedily cut the rope and attached the canoe to the other boat; then Bujong and he entered it, and taking up the oars which were in it, the two light boats made a rapid progress for more than a hundred yards, when the cliffs, sinking lower, allowed them to see a large building, raised on piles, and surrounded by a high stockade of pointed bamboos. Before the stockades some men were lying idly on the ground; women, children, goats, and poultry were gathered round, and it was evident that the music was of a holiday character, for the fleet was absent.

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CHAPTER XXII.

Poll's unlucky Blunder—The Pursuit—The Boom in the River—The Second Fort—Bujong's Proposal—The Boats aground—The Desertion of the Dyaks—Night Lodgings—Nocturnal Visitors—The Land Crab—The Wild Hog.

THE absence of the fighting pirates gave confidence to the voyagers; and the Dyaks having found in the locker of the canoe two cocoa-nuts, some dry fish, and a jar of rice, they ate the fish themselves, and transferred the rest to the boat; and thus the famished people were once more supplied with food. They divided the shells and set aside the bowls for water vessels; then they steeped the rice in the milk, and ate their simple meal heartily. But, unfortunately, Poll heard the sounds of eating, and, vexed at being excluded, and impatient in her confinement, she disengaged her head from its covering, and, to the consternation of her friends, gave a loud shrill whistle to recall their attention to her wants.

The Dyaks muttered vengeance, and if the unlucky bird had been in their power, her doom would have been certain; for it was soon evident that the lazy pirates had been roused by the signal, and starting up, had caught sight of the boats. Some seized spears, others ran to the river to unmoor the canoe, which the dexterity of the Dyaks had luckily secured, and when the loss was discovered, the loud and terrific war-cry struck horror into the hearts of the fugitives, who saw that pursuit was inevitable, and escape barely possible. With redoubled zeal they laboured at the oars, Frank made ready their sole defence, the gun, and Miss Griffin and Minna were persuaded to lie down at the

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bottom of the boat, and submit to be covered with the rug.

The pirates forced their way through the jungle along the summit of the high cliffs, and commenced the attack by throwing spears and blowing small arrows, which, Sunudeen said, were frequently poisoned, through tubes, called *sumpitans*. Fortunately the distance was so great that spears and arrows alike fell harmlessly; and the rowers trusted they gained on the pursuers, who were impeded by the difficulty of forcing the thickets.

"Had we any right to take that canoe, Walter?" asked Minna, throwing the oppressive woollen rug from her head.

"I shouldn't have liked to have been the thief," answered he; "but people often do wrong things when they are in terror. We will ask Mr. Sinclair to make them set it adrift down the river as soon as we are beyond pursuit."

"It will be some time, I fear, before we are beyond pursuit," said Mr. Sinclair, who heard the children's conversation. "Sunudeen says the pirates usually have a second fort on the rivers; and though we have already distanced the first detachment of our enemies, we may have more to pass; we must, therefore, be on our guard, take care to keep all silent; and I must have that little head sheltered again."

Minna reluctantly drew in her head, and they now cautiously wound round a bend of the river five miles above the first fortress, and came suddenly on a barrier, which seemed impassable. The trunks of some enormous trees lashed together by rattans were laid across the river, and formed a boom, which at once checked all progress, and filled them with dread of the fortress, which it was certainly placed to guard.

"We're in a nice mess now," said Tom, "between two fires. I say, let's cut down this boom, and pull on; you see, we may have a chance again' a strange

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sail ; but there's nothing for it but to strike when the enemy has shown her colours, and you haven't a gun to answer her. What do you say master—are we to have another run ?"

"But how can we possibly pass this formidable barrier ?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

'Will we hoist her nately over the boom ?" said Mike. "We're able-handed, and Miss and the ould woman are light ballast."

"I protest against being classed as ballast," said Miss Griffin, in a sepulchral tone, raising her pale face and dishevelled head. "I insist upon being landed."

"It will be better that it should be so," said Mr. Sinclair. "We shall be able to find a resting-place for those who cannot work beneath these roots. There they will be safe—and the boat ought to be completely lightened."

Miss Griffin and Minna, were, therefore, placed on a ledge of rock till the strong men hauled the boat over the barrier ; the canoe, or *sampan*, as it was called by the Dyaks, was lighter, and raised with less difficulty ; then the trembling Miss Griffin and her pupil were lifted over and placed again in the boat ; and now they pulled up the river with all the circumspection their perilous position demanded ; for, assuredly, a fortress must be near, and they might find the pirates prepared for action.

Close along the sheltering bank of the river they proceeded for two hundred yards, when the jungle of tall bamboos, which had afforded them such effectual concealment, ceased. The ground had evidently been cleared, and the banks were covered with long grass for a hundred yards from the river to the spot where the stockades of the fort rose. A low hill hung over the water, on which some tall palm-trees, mingled with the drooping casuarina, formed a slight screen, while the chattering of the parrots in the trees drowned, not only the sounds of the oars, but the responsive gabbling

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of Minna's pet, which refused to be silent when she heard the voices of her fraternity. Noisy ducks were dabbling in the muddy margin of the water, and the dexterous and unscrupulous Dyaks caught up and twisted the necks of two pair as they were passing.

All seemed quiet at the pirates' station. Outside the stockades goats and bullocks were grazing, children rolling about, and here and there a woman was seated, watching them, and weaving fine matting. Crouched down in the boats, it was only when a thick tree protected them from observation, that the voyagers ventured to glance at the scene, and all went on well, till some children, pursuing each other over the hill at the side of the river, saw the strange boat, and, by their shrill cries drew the mothers to their side, who, in great terror, caught up their children, and fled within the stockade, from whence the loud sound of the gong was speedily heard to ring.

"The men are absent," said Sunudeen, in a tone of relief, "but that signal will recal them if they are within hearing. We must make speed, for these are men without mercy."

"Why should we not land now?" asked Bujong, in a low tone.

"Silence," answered Sunudeen; "I will not leave them here."

These words filled Mr. Sinclair with uneasiness; for he comprehended that the Dyaks had the intention of separating themselves from the rest; and how they should make way through this unknown country without a guide was a painful question. After a little consideration, he said quietly to Sunudeen,—"My friend, we are strangers and destitute, take us to your people, shelter us in your house. Let us have rest and food, and send some one to guide us to Kuching. The *Tuan Besar* will give good gifts to the man who shall lead us to him in safety."

Sunudeen looked down gloomily and was silent, but

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the keen eyes of Bujong lighted up with a glad expression as he said, "Let all come with us. Our *Datu* will make a feast to the pale strangers, and our women will dance and sing."

An angry glance from his companion silenced the young Dyak, and no more was said till they lost sight of the fort, and even heard no longer the sound of the gong. By that time it was too evident that their voyage was at its termination; the river was now but a shallow stream, in the clear waters of which bright-coloured fish, and still more brilliant, deadly-looking snakes, were sporting. The low banks were encumbered with a mass of acacias, pandanus, and various palms, entangled with bamboos. The thicket seemed impenetrable, while the boat, already grating against the pebbly bed of the stream, was no longer available.

"What will become of us!" exclaimed Walter, as he looked round with dismay on the thick jungle on each side, a line of mountains clothed with thick forest-trees, immediately before them; while, too probably, behind them the terrible pirates were already in pursuit. Bujong, without hesitation, drew the canoe to the bank on the right hand, moored it, and went into the jungle to cut a thick bamboo, and Sunudeen, turning to Mr. Sinclair, said,—

"Here we leave you. Take these," putting an axe into his hands, which had been left in the canoe, and throwing into the boat a pair of the ducks. Then, pointing to Bujong, who was out of hearing, he hastily added, "You must not come among our people. Our Datu is greedy for heads, he makes war in his prahus with all other tribes, and ever with strangers; he wants women-slaves. Go on at the base of the mountains to the south. Sleep in the caves, or in the thick trees. You will find water, fruits, and rice. Do not follow us."

Bujong now rejoined them, saying, "You come with us."

"Not so," said Sunudeen; "the pale strangers will

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remain here to guard the *sampans* till we bring hither many of our people to carry them to the village."

"They will not stay, they will flee from us," replied Bujong impetuously. "Let the men carry their women, and follow us."

"We do not choose to follow you, Bujong," said Mr. Sinclair; "we are strong; we are armed; and if you attempt to use violence, we will shoot you on the spot. Since you will not be at amity with us, leave us in peace."

The young Dyak, with threatening words and gestures, plunged into the jungle, and went towards the north. Sunudeen remained behind for a minute or two to take leave of his friends, and to point out the sails and ropes which remained in the canoe. "These are yours; we will take your *sampan*—go quickly. Bujong is the son of the Datu, and both love blood."

Then he followed his companion, leaving the unfortunate voyagers stunned with their unhappy condition and entire destitution, and looking with consternation at the choice between the jungle and the mountains. The seamen searched the canoe, and took from it the large sails of matting, which were neatly rolled up, and some coils of rope made of palm fibre, treasures not to be despised; therefore, dividing the burthen among them, they made their way along the jungle, at the margin of the stream, towards the hills which rose by degrees to mountains. Tom and Mike led the way as pioneers, and with the axe and a long knife, cleared a path through which Miss Griffin and Minna with difficulty followed; the elder lady, however, protesting against the whole proceeding as injudicious, and insisting on it that the proper plan would have been to have taken the Dyaks prisoners, and compelled them to act as guides.

"Then, Miss Griffin," said Frank, "I have no doubt the clever rogues would have guided us into the midst of their tribe, who would have made slaves of Minna

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and you, and most likely of Tom and Mike; but we three useless fellows would have been honoured by having our heads pickled, dried, and hung up, to the admiration of the rest of the tribe."

Minna laughed and cried alternately; and Miss Griffin then proposed that they should set fire to the jungle, and thus make a road for themselves.

"Make a fire to roast us all," answered Tom. "Don't you see as how, with a brisk south wind in our teeth, the road would be aft, and not forrard. Ye'd make a bad master for a ship, mistress, seeing you're not up to boxing the compass yet."

"Your observation is impertinent, young man," answered the offended lady. "I see no compass, or I could point out to you its utility according to the rules of science. My knowledge of navigation is founded on the firm basis of the mathematics."

"Will them mathematics show you what point the wind comes from, think you, madam?" asked Tom.

"I think, Tom," said Mr. Sinclair, "that in this dilemma our arms may be of more use than our tongues. Let us get on with our pioneering."

But with only one axe the pioneering proceeded slowly; for the knives were indifferent tools for clearing. Occasionally a clear spot on the rising ground of the woody hills afforded them a little respite, and on one of these grassy glades they rested, cooked the ducks, and discussed, somewhat sadly, their formidable undertaking.

"It's an awkward job, sure enough," said Tom, scowling at the two ladies; "you see *they* could never be trailed over these here high mountains; and Walter here, as has seen a sort of chart of this queer country, says as how they run quite through it, like the backbone of a herring. I like none of this land voyaging; it's all fog-sailing, without compass or chronometer. There's nothing like a sight of water for keeping you right."

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"But the pirates, Tom," suggested Walter.

"Ay, there's something in that, boy," answered he; "but you see the dogs keep mainly to the rivers. Now, I were thinking, if we got a station somewhere sea-board, on the cliffs, we might set a watch, and try to hail a vessel."

"That is a prudent plan," said Miss Griffin. "By all means let us hail a ship, and then order the captain to take us at once to Calcutta."

Tom gave a low, long whistle, and said, "Captains isn't used to be ordered, mistress. We'd have to go where he were bound; but what of that? We'd better sail to Cheeny or Ameriky nor be stuck here among bushes and canes like wild beasts."

Mr. Sinclair sighed over his disappointment; for he now saw no hope of reaching Rajah Brooke: but Miss Griffin roused him from his little selfish feeling by demanding where she was to sleep, for night was at hand.

"Will we be hoisting Miss and her ladyship into a three?" asked Mike. "It's a nate dhry lodging is a three in this quare counthry, and its out of the rache of them pirates it is, altogether. Will I run up and rig a whip for them?"

Minna was charmed with the idea of a real castle in the air, like that of the Swiss family in the Happy Isle; but Miss Griffin was indignant at the proposal, and negatived it at once.

"There is nothing absurd about the thing, I can tell you, Miss Griffin," said Frank; "for Sunudeen said many of the tribes really dwell constantly in the mango or fig-trees. The boughs spread close and horizontally round, and could be easily made firm, level, and comfortable with cross-branches and long grass. I do believe you would feel safer there than on the ground."

"I decline the experiment," replied the lady, majestically waving her hand. "Let your men make me a tent."

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This they contrived to accomplish tolerably well, by cutting down some stout bamboos for poles, and spreading over them the matting which had formed the sails of the sampan. The rug was spread over the ground, and Miss Griffin was satisfied with her dormitory. The men slept on the ground round the tent, and were undisturbed except by the cries of night-prowling animals, none of which, however, visited the encampment.

They left their repose reluctantly to renew their laborious efforts; but now Miss Griffin, seeing the necessity of yielding to circumstances, endeavoured to lessen the toil of the workmen by deigning to thread her way among the trees which covered the lower hills, and which were not so impenetrable as the bamboos of the thick jungle; and thus they were able to make a long progress before night and fatigue compelled them to rest at the side of a rippling mountain rill, the waters of which freshened the air, which was perfumed with the fragrance of flowers and fruit. There, beneath a fig-tree, they boiled, in the earthen jar, a portion of the rice they had still remaining, and, with the addition of a cocoa-nut, made their frugal repast, amused with the chattering of the parrots, and with the antics of the mischievous monkeys, that pelted the intruders with the figs, which, though not very luscious, were a welcome addition to their scanty food.

"What horrible creature is that feeding on the grass?" cried Minna. "Can it be a crab, Walter, so far from the sea?"

"It is one of the land-crabs, I am sure," answered he. "I know they burrow in mountains, and come out at night to feed. See, there are more! How ugly they are! but they are good to eat. So we must try to catch them. Come! let us have a chase."

Then with sticks and stones the men assailed the luckless crabs, which ran off swiftly after their side-

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long fashion of running, which diverted the boys greatly. Some of the creatures were laden with a little sheaf of grass which they held in their claws, but which did not seem to impede their progress. But the men, in their hunger, were desperate; six crabs were cut off in their retreat, and, though they fought bravely with their sharp pincers, were overcome, dispatched, and put down to roast in their hideous purple shell.

"Now," said Mr. Sinclair, "one of you climbing boys must procure a citron or some oranges to flavour the meat, which will then be excellent. And here comes another noisy creature, that is also eatable, but an awkward adversary."

This was a large wild hog, or babyroussa, which, grunting and wheezing, came up to enjoy the fruit which the monkeys flung down. To waste a charge on this animal was not thought expedient, and Tom undertook to stun it with a blow of the axe on the head, while the rest were to press on and complete the work of destruction with their knives. Miss Griffin and Minna retreated to their tent to avoid the sight of the butchery, which was not, after all, accomplished so easily as the men had anticipated; for the hard skull of the beast resisted Tom's heavy blow, and with frightful screams it ran forward, dashed its tusks against the poles of the tent, and overthrew it upon the terrified occupants, trampling over them in its attempt to escape. The assailants were, however, ready to meet it with repeated blows and wounds, and, though all more or less bruised by the contest, they finally overcame the desperate animal, which was speedily converted into rudely-shaped joints of pork, to the great contentment of Tom and Mike, who felt the misery of short allowance more than the rest. In the mean time, the tent had been raised, and the alarmed tenants consoled with the assurance that all danger was now past.

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"I can scarcely realize the fact that we are both living," said Miss Griffin, "and I cannot refrain from entering my censure against the ill-regulated tactics which allowed the assailant to charge and overthrow your stronghold at the first attempt. A line of men, drawn out before the tent, would have protected it."

"Would it be her Majesty's Life Guards, God save them," said Mike, "we would be calling out over the say, to muster round your ladyship's honour, and they niver sinsible we were nading them a bit; for sorra a line of men we'd be gettin' here, barrin' ourselves, and we all mad just then, killing this same jewel of a grunter."

But as the ladies were found not only to be living, but to be unwounded, though a little bruised by their rude foe, Miss Griffin waived further remonstrance, the tent was restored to its security, Walter and Frank promised to watch in turn, lest any more alarms should occur in the night, and all retired to their needful rest.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Swamps and Snakes—Lizards and Insects—The Red Men—The Lady of the Cave—A fierce Combat—The Defeat of the Oran-outangs—The Waking of the Dead—Cultivated Grounds—A Village.

EARLY in the morning Mike and Tom were at work broiling steaks, which were dished up on the broad leaves of the plantain, and, with the addition of bowls of fresh cool water from the rivulet, they all made a capital breakfast, which gave them spirit for their daily

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labour. They continued to walk through the wood, which was not only an easier road, but afforded them shelter from the burning sun, and fruit to refresh them. The jungle was now less intricate, the bamboos were replaced by reeds, then tall grass succeeded, and the broad green plain tempted the weary pilgrims to leave the woods. Fortunately Tom and Mike led the way, for a few steps plunged them into a marsh much more embarrassing than the jungle; they had literally sunk above the knees, and required the assistance of their friends to extricate themselves. From the long grass of the swamp the hideous heads of numerous venomous-loooking, brilliant snakes were reared, as if to defy the intrusion of strangers, and the whole of the travellers quickly retreated to the less dangerous forest.

"With these swamps between us and the sea," said Miss Griffin, "how can we ever reach it? We may be doomed to wander for ever beneath these lonely mountains."

"I do not fancy the swamps spread to any great distance," answered Mr. Sinclair. "Here the ground is low, but it must soon rise and become firmer; for I believe many branches run down towards the sea from the main chain of mountains."

"Already I can see a hazy line before us," said Walter, after they had proceeded to some distance. "Depend on it, Miss Griffin, we shall soon escape from swamps and snakes; and I feel certain that the ground is firm at the edge of the marsh, and will bear such light steps as Minna's and mine."

"Let us try, Walter," said Minna; and leaving the trees, they descended the slope to the unwooded plain, and skimmed along lightly among the long grass, which was mingled with beautiful and fragrant flowers, and they were soon in advance of the heavy brigade, as they named the elder party.

"There is something moving in the grass before us,

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at the edge of that brook," said Minna. "Oh, Walter! I am dreadfully afraid! I see its glittering eyes! Can it be an alligator?"

"Not in that shallow stream," replied he; "but keep behind me, Minna, and don't be afraid; I have a good stout stick. What a strange head! Run back for Mr. Sinclair to come and look at it. It is certainly something wonderful; but it moves so slowly, we need not have any alarm."

Mr. Sinclair was soon at the spot, accompanied by Frank, with a rifle, in case there was danger. The huge head was again raised to survey the newly-arrived strangers, who were near enough to observe that this monster, which appeared about six feet in length, was really nothing more than a gigantic lizard, or iguana, named, as Mr. Sinclair said, *Hydrosaurus giganteus.* It lashed its tail, and opened its hideous mouth, as if quite ready to be dangerous if it were meddled with; and as it could not be useful for food, they withdrew from the very unpleasant neighbourhood of the monstrous animal.

"These damp woods seem to swarm with reptiles," said Mr. Sinclair. "Observe yon cluster of trees overhanging the water which appear to contain immense nations of animals. Even the fantastic forms of the curious *Orchidæ,* the irregular Flora of nature, which spring from the trunks, look like living creatures, and see what a variety of lizards are darting about amongst them. There is that terrific-looking little harmless animal, known by the name of the Flying dragon, and which really seems a miniature representative of that fabulous dragon which has been the dread of the superstitious in all ages. Now look at the smooth straight trunk of yon tall palm, and you may observe the rapid motion of that keen-looking little *Tree Gecko,* which runs as swiftly up the perpendicular stem, as if on the ground."

"And what millions of ants and honey-bees," said

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Walter. "I should think there will be a good store of honey in some of these old trees. Oh, Minna, look at that giant spider, with its horny armour covered with spikes, to save it from foes."

"It is a huge, frightful creature, Walter," replied Minna; "and do see how the cruel wretch is devouring the poor ants. What a world of insects! How can they all live?"

"They live on each other," said Mr. Sinclair; "and doubtless during their short existence have that animal enjoyment which God has bountifully bestowed on all the lower orders of creation, reserving to man alone the vast and responsible boon of intellectual pleasure on earth, and that spark of the Divine Spirit which, looking beyond earth, aspires to a holier life hereafter."

After crossing the little rivulet, the ground ascending gradually, became firm and fertile. Rich grassy plains were fragrant with new and lovely flowers, or waving with grain, while silvery threads of sparkling water ran through them; and the low hills they now approached were backed by mountains running towards the coast, which were clothed to the summit with dense dark forests. They were now entering a land of plenty, and, as they earnestly hoped, of peace; and they listened with joy to the human-like discourse of the parrots, the screaming, wailing, contentious cries of the various tribes of monkeys, and the ceaseless chirping of "the evening reveller," the shrill-voiced *Cicada*, a gigantic insect, as large as a sparrow, which gave life to the charming scene.

But Miss Griffin becoming alarmed on the open plain, lest they should be attacked by the wild hogs, begged they might at least withdraw to the shelter of the woods, asking Mr. Sinclair if there was any chance of meeting with a village where they might lodge in security.

"We shall probably, in this fertile country, meet with habitations soon," answered he: "but whether it

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will be safe to enter them, is a doubtful question. We can scarcely consider ourselves an armed force, since we have but one gun amongst us."

Before they left the rivulet, the men cut for themselves long stout bamboos, which they sharpened at the end to a point. These spears were formidable weapons in determined hands, and the array of brave defenders inspired Miss Griffin with some confidence.

Frank, who was leading the way, suddenly stopped, and cried out,—

"Here are the natives, at last."

"Musha!" cried Mike, who was next him; "but these same will be an ould ancient people; sure, Master Frank, will it be a Greenwich Hospital they'll be havin' in this far-away counthry, and them being the ould salts, barrin' they're short of toggery; and my boys, they're ugly, and that's thrue altogether!"

"I say, Mr. Sinclair — Walter!" called Frank; "will you step on? Are yon fellows really men?"

"Make your gun ready, Frank," replied Mr. Sinclair, hastily; "but be discreet. Tom and Mike, form in the front. God protect us; it is a body of the hideous and dangerous oran-outangs, of which we have all heard. Would that we had a stronghold for these feeble women."

"I see a hollow yonder in the dark rock," said Walter. "It is a good way off; but we may get them up, perhaps, before the beasts see us."

"We will try, my boy," answered Mr. Sinclair. "Tom, you with Mike and Frank must defend our retreat, and we will try to get Miss Griffin and the child into a place of safety."

But this was not easily done, for when they caught sight of the body of red men, as they seemed to be at a distance, they were almost too terrified to move, and it required the most energetic remonstrances from Mr. Sinclair to induce Miss Griffin to hasten towards

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the rock, while she muttered censures, as she went on, against the ignorance and inattention of the leaders, which had produced such peril. They arrived at length, out of breath, before the opening in the rock, into which they would at once have hurried; but Mr. Sinclair stopped them till the young men came up, who lighted a bundle of dry grass and threw it into the the cave, to expel the bats, or any other unpleasant tenants. A piercing cry was immediately heard, and a huge beast sprung out, overthrowing Mike in its progress, and rushing forward, climbed with agility a lofty tree, from which it looked down on the invaders with a grin of defiance.

"Worra! but it's a powerful baste she is," said Mike, rubbing his shoulder, "for a faymale woman baste. Faith! didn't I think she'd kilt me altogether with her big hands. Sure, my boys, it's sorra a bit of chance we'll be havin' with yon fellows, seeing she's such a mighty nate hand with her fists."

Frank ascertained that the cave was now empty, though it was by no means an agreeable tenement, being dark and filthy; but at length Miss Griffin and Minna were induced to enter it, with the faithful Poll for their companion. Mr. Sinclair and Walter refused to share the retreat, but, armed with spears, joined the ranks of the defenders, who, having placed large stones before the cave, that the proprietors might not return, drew up before it. They saw now, with some compassion, that the oran-outang they had driven from the cave was a female with a young one in her arms, which she was tenderly nursing, while she kept vindictive watch on her foes, who were now aware that they had been discovered by the troop of strange beasts, which were tearing thick boughs from the trees, and shaking them, with furious gestures and harsh cries at the intruders, as they came forward, walking upright on their hind legs, supported by their formidable weapons.

There were not less than a dozen of these human-

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like forms; they were from five to six feet in height, covered with reddish-brown hair, with most hideous faces, which still preserved that resemblance to humanity which renders them so peculiarly odious. As the animals drew near enough to examine the appearance of the strangers, they stopped at a short distance, and again, with a sharp peculiar cry of two notes, waved their thick staffs, while four of them, which the observers supposed must be the females, retreated to the high trees, leaving eight strong beasts to contend with, each of which, by mere brute force, might have overthrown the whole of the opponents; but the judgment and mental resources of man are strong arms.

"Be patient and resolute, my good men," said Mr. Sinclair, "or we are lost. Frank, you have both barrels loaded."

"What think you of a round of cheers, sir?" said Tom. "It tells, when you send a broadside."

"You are right, my thoughtful man," answered he. "Let the fierce creatures come a little nearer; then the cheers and a shot; and repeat them, if they do not retreat—now!"

Three tremendous cheers were followed by a shot which brought down the leader, and terrified three cowards, which threw down their arms and fled up the trees after the females. The rest staggered wildly for a moment, then rushed forward and were greeted by a repetition of the cheers and the shot, and a second beast fell. Still the three braves which were left came forward, and to give Frank time to reload, the rest charged in a line with their sharp spears. The desperate creatures did not seem to heed the pointed weapons directed against them; the largest of the animals seized Tom's spear in its teeth, tore it from his firm grasp; then throwing down its own staff, broke the bamboo, which was of three inches in diameter, into several pieces, grinning vengeance on Tom, who had in the mean time caught up the axe,

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which, with a tremendous blow, he buried in the thick skull of his antagonist, and the tottering but still vindictive animal, striving to catch his arm in its teeth, fell back heavily to the ground.

By this time, Frank had reloaded the rifle, and while the blow of another wounded beast was descending on the head of Mr. Sinclair, he shot it to the heart. The last animal, maddened by the sight of its dead and dying companions, broke the bough it carried, and hurled the heavy fragments at its enemies, and then rushed upon them to receive the last charge of Frank, and fell, carrying the boy down with it, and even in dying fixed its teeth in his shoulder.

Frank was soon extricated, and his wound washed and bound up, while Tom and Mike went round to put an end to those beasts that were not yet dead. It was a painful sight to behold such a scene of destruction;—five huge creatures, with features so much resembling humanity, were stretched dead; and Walter could not forbear shedding tears as he turned away from the bloody field. The fall of night compelled them all to seek the shelter of the dismal cave, rather than be exposed to a nocturnal attack; but through the whole night they were kept awake by the mournful wailings of the bereaved mates over the dead. And in the morning they found all the bodies had been removed, a startling mystery, which increased the painful feelings of the victors.

"Will they have carried off their dead to bury them dacently out of sight, are you thinking, Master Walter?" said Mike. "Musha! wasn't it quare I was feeling myself, when the poor faymale bastes were waking the corpses in the dead hours. Was you sinsible of that same, Miss?"

"Indeed, Mike," answered Minna, "I should think none of us slept in that filthy den, and I did feel sad to hear the mournful cries of the poor animals. It is very shocking, Mr. Sinclair, that they should be so like

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men. I wish they would walk on four legs, and then we should be sure that they were really brutes."

"Of that, my dear child, there can be no doubt," answered Mr. Sinclair. "The name *oran-outang* signifies, in the language of the country, a wild man, and the ignorant natives refrain from destroying these animals, believing them to be the degenerate descendants of those wild tribes of the aborigines who, we are told, still actually inhabit the woods, and dwell in trees, in some of the yet unexplored regions of the interior; and that their savage mode of life has robbed them even of the gift of speech. But reason and revelation assure us, that man is a distinct creation; formed in God's image, endowed with spiritual gifts, and separated from the brute by that impassable gulf, which lies between mere animal life and the glorious hope of immortality."

"Besides," added Miss Griffin, "anatomists have fully shown the physical discrepancy in the races. The development of the head, formed to contain the wonderful working brain; the extraordinary mechanism of the hand, suitable to the labour entailed on humanity; the erect posture, and the muscles necessary to preserve the noble and active mode of walking, belong only to man, and are all deficient in the nearest approach to the human form—the hideous, abhorred *Troglodytes*."

"I wish they would have left one behind for us to examine," said Walter; "but, perhaps it is better as it is, for Minna would have been afraid of the ugly creature."

"And I conclude that we had better march forward," said Miss Griffin. "In fact, the horrible smell of that cave, and the dread that the surrounding trees may be filled with those monsters, have deprived me of all appetite, and I would propose that we should defer our breakfast till we reach a more agreeable spot."

No one wished to continue on the bloody field; they,

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therefore, walked on, providing themselves, on their way, with new spears to replace those broken in the conflict, and, reaching a break in the branch line of mountains, they passed through a narrow gorge, the high rocky walls of which sheltered them from the overpowering beams of the sun, and proceeded among the mountains towards the south, till they rested beneath a tree of spicy fragrance. This, Mr. Sinclair told them, was the wild nutmeg, the fruit of which was still green; but the peculiar aroma was easily distinguished. Thousands of pigeons were feeding on the tree, and as many as were needed were captured in the nests, or knocked down by the men, and plucked and broiled for breakfast. The flesh of the birds, fed on the delicious fruit, was very delicate, and, though the seamen preferred the pork, which was yet eatable, the rest rejoiced to have the lighter food.

Keeping under the shadow of the cliffs, they still made but slow progress through the close sultry gorge, and were glad when, towards evening, they issued from the mountains into an open country of broad level plains, adorned with noble trees, and fertile in waving grain and rich grass, on which they saw, with some astonishment, herds of cattle, of the buffalo species, feeding.

"Surely," said Miss Griffin, "this looks like an approach to civilization; but it may be but the haunt of the better-informed but evil-intentioned pirates."

"The pirates are not agriculturists," answered Mr. Sinclair, "and these are cultivated grounds;" and he pointed out some patches of rice close to a small river; there were also sweet potatoes, tobacco, and plants of pepper, supported by sticks, some of which were yet covered with green flowers, others were bearing bunches of small green berries hanging like grapes. The rice, an early crop, was already ripe, and the boys plucked some ears to bring to Miss Griffin and Minna.

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"You know, Miss Griffin," said Walter, "that in Eastern nations it has always been the practice for the wayfarer to eat the grain or the fruit as he passes along, without any imputation of dishonesty."

"It is a relic of the ancient hospitality of the patriarchal world," said Miss Griffin. "May we be fortunate enough to find here a primitive people, untainted either by the fierce and unruly passions of savage life, or the sordid vices of civilization. Had we not better have green branches cut, to carry in our hands to indicate our peaceful intentions."

"But here are no people yet, Miss Griffin," said Minna. "Here are fields and cattle; but where are the owners?"

"Look up, Minna," said Walter, as they left a grove of cocoa-nut and sago palms; and he pointed to a low hill, on which stood several large huts, raised on piles; the village, or cluster of huts, being entirely surrounded by a stockade of bamboos.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Reception—Dyak Hospitality—Religious Opinions—Tom at Work—Preparations for the Coast—The Edible Birds' Nests—The Departure—The Procession to the Coast—The Scotch Captain—The *Amsterdam*.

THE travellers paused and looked at each other; then Miss Griffin said imperatively, "Go on; you have arms. And surely men, rational men, are safer to deal with than brutes. Rude as these natives may be, I should certainly prefer the shelter of a Dyak's hut to that of the den of an oran-outang."

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Everybody agreed with Miss Griffin, and, though they prepared against aggression, they walked quietly forward towards the low hill on which the houses stood, and from which a clear rivulet dashed down to the plains, overhung with the feathery casuarina, and spread animation and fertility over the scene. Before they reached the palisades of the village they came on some of the men, working with spades, in the rice-grounds. They were clothed scantily with the *sarong*, or large, loose, winding scarf, which usually constitutes the sole attire of the people, and were fine, well-formed men, with open countenances and frank manners.

Mr. Sinclair met them with outstretched hand, and in the Malay tongue briefly stated the circumstances which had driven him and his friends to wander among strangers; and, while he craved the hospitality of these natives, he inquired if it were possible to journey from hence to Sarawak, where they might seek the protection of the "TUAN BESAR."

The countenance of the man to whom Mr. Sinclair had addressed himself changed. He said, vehemently, "No! no!" and then, pointing to Miss Griffin and the children, he rapidly sketched the dangers that lay in the way: inaccessible mountains, impervious forests, impassable rivers; and, above all, fierce, savage tribes, who killed and devoured all strangers, and would even feast on their own children.

Mr. Sinclair shuddered over these details, and, though he believed them to be exaggerated, sufficient of certain peril remained to crush any hopes of accomplishing this plan. This he explained to his own party; and, though Miss Griffin was unconvinced of the dangers, and declared her resolution to go to Sarawak under any circumstances, she was at length reluctantly compelled to yield to the decision of the majority, that they must attempt to escape by the coast.

By this time the women and children, summoned

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by the sound of strange voices, appeared outside the stockades. They gazed with wonder and pity on the travellers, and then, with urgent words and gestures invited them to enter the village. The weary wanderers gladly followed the kind and cheerful women, who were all clad in a short petticoat of native cloth, in addition to the sarong, and wore ornaments of brass or gold. The enclosure was not unlike an immense farm-yard, and contained many of the usual farm-yard tenants, cows, goats, poultry, and pigeons, with the more unusual addition of monkeys and young deer, the monkeys being engaged in teasing and annoying the well-behaved poultry.

Then the man who conducted them pointed out that they must go to the largest house of the village, which however could only be reached by a ladder, so rude in construction, that Miss Griffin shrank from it in dismay. It was merely the rough trunk of a tree, with notches cut at such a great distance from each other, that women, in the dress of civilized nations, could not possibly have climbed it. But the practised sailors carried Miss Griffin and Minna, and even Walter required help. They entered a large clean room, floored with split bamboos placed close together; on each side were many smaller apartments partitioned off by matting, and which seemed to be inhabited by different families. Two of these divisions were given to the travellers, and the women brought them clean fine white mats to cover the floor, and to pile up in heaps to serve for seats or beds.

Miss Griffin and Minna were thankful to rest on the mats, and the women at first attempted to enter into conversation with them, but finding this impossible, they retired "on hospitable thoughts intent;" and in a short time, the travellers were summoned to the large room, where a repast was spread on the floor.

There were cocoa-nut bowls heaped with smoking rice, on which were laid pieces of broiled fowl,

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seasoned with the black pepper, broiled fish with slices of lemon spread upon them, sweet dishes of rice and honey, bowls of milk, and bamboo-flasks of fresh water. Some coarse earthenware plates were ostentatiously produced and spoons made of bamboo. Everything was clean, and well cooked, and the wayfarers certainly made a better meal than they had done since they left the ship; and were charmed with the hospitality of the simple people, who seemed thoroughly to enjoy the sight of their guests eating.

Then, Mr. Sinclair was introduced to the *Orang-Kaya*, or chief of the people, and he learnt from him that his people were a purely agricultural tribe, and never warred, except when they were invaded by the pirates of the coast, or by some of the hostile tribes. At stated periods, they were in the habit of going down to the coast, to convey the productions of their lands, consisting of forest trees, camphor drawn from the camphor-laurel, which abounded in the woods, canes, sago prepared by themselves from the palms, bees-wax from the stores in the old trees, birds'-nests from the caves in the mountains, and cattle, with which the fertile plains abounded. In return for these, they received from the ships salt, crockery, gaudy cottons, cooking-vessels of copper and iron, and knives, axes, and other iron goods.

These vessels, the travellers heard with regret, were generally on their way to China or Japan; the India ships touched on the west coast; but this report did not intimidate Miss Griffin, who persisted in her intention of compelling the captain of the first ship they met with, to take her and her pupil to Calcutta, though Tom argued with her on the utter uselessness of such an attempt. "You'll find yourself a good bit out in your reckoning," said he. "Didn't I tell you before, that there's not a soul living, saving her Majesty, God bless her, and the admiral, as can order a captain. And there was Captain Moody, he as

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these young chaps was done by, he was the man as would have made no bones in ordering you yourself, madam, up to punishment, if you'd been giving orders in his ship; or set on to talk to him promiscuously."

"Your language, young man," said she haughtily; "though to me unintelligible, would seem to be impertinent. The father of Miss Gayton is willing and able to pay for the accommodation we shall receive."

"My dear madam," said Mr. Sinclair, "ships do not alter their course to set down passengers, like stage coaches. We must be contented to be landed at the port to which the vessel may be bound, if we are fortunate enough to secure a passage in one. But now it is time to retire. I fear our hosts cannot join us in prayer; but we can show them how earnestly Christians worship their God."

The people regarded with wonder the serious devotions of their guests; but apparently aware of the nature of the service, they remained respectfully silent. At the conclusion, Mr. Sinclair asked the chief if his people did not also pray.

"We dare not talk to the Great Spirit," answered the man; "but we know he will give us another good life after this, if we are honest and hospitable, and kind to our wives and families. And we know that liars and pirates shall be sent after death to wander for ever in the great desert mountain *Keni Balloo.*

There was a foundation of truth in the simple faith of this people, that encouraged Mr. Sinclair to hope that a little instruction might open their minds for the reception of Christianity, and this instruction he determined to omit no opportunity of bestowing.

Their repose was delightful, for the beds were clean, and they dreaded no disturbance, and they rose, in good spirits, to look round on their new situation.

Boiled rice, and bowls of milk formed their wholesome breakfast, but while they were eating it; the curious eyes of Walter detected, hanging from the

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roof, a row of ghastly heads, which had been dried with the skin and hair upon them, and had small shells stuck in to replace the eyes. He looked very much shocked as he pointed them out to Mr. Sinclair, who, already aware of this revolting custom among all the native tribes, asked Abdullah, the chief, if these were strictly the heads of the enemies, killed in war.

"We dare not offend the Great Spirit by taking heads in the time of peace," answered Abdullah. "Our tribe do not desire heads to prove to the young maidens that they are brave. Our women know we will guard them from the open enemy, and from the cowardly pirate. We take these heads to show that we are not to be invaded with impunity. Such has ever been the custom of our fathers."

"They are, in fact," said Mr. Sinclair to his friends, "but the standards of the enemy, hung up to preserve the memory of the victory, as even we, ourselves, do in Europe. And repugnant to our feelings as these memorials are, Walter, they are less bloody and disgusting than the scalps of the North American Indians. Even this relic of a barbarous age may, I trust, be relinquished when Christianity shall have extended, as it surely will, its mild and benignant influence over this lovely country."

Tom and Mike had been examining, with great contempt, the clumsy substitute for a ladder, and now came in to propose that they should make a more convenient approach to the house.

"It's not over twelve feet, you see," said Tom; "and if these civil folks will lend us some axes, we'll step to the hill-side and cut down a couple of yon slender pines, and there's lots of strong canes to serve for cross-pieces. They have tools and nails, and, if they're willing, we'll rig them up a tight ladder in no time, and then Miss can run up and down cleverly."

Mr. Sinclair had, by this time, arranged with Abdullah that they would accompany the people in

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their journey to the coast to meet the traffic ships that were expected; and as they did not set out for ten days, and it was desirable to have some mode of leaving the house conveniently, he offered the services of his workmen to the chief, who gladly accepted them. The two men, and the two boys, therefore set out to procure materials for their work, delighted to ramble at leisure over the new country. The rainy season, not long past, had caused the little rivulets to overflow, and thus fertilized the rich and luxuriant plains, where rice, maize, and grass were waving on every side; and like Egypt after the inundation of the Nile, the land seemed to smile with plenty. Cattle and deer were feeding under the shade of the camphor-tree, the palms, and various fruit-trees; and the air was perfumed with the smell of the orange, the lemon, and the spicy cassia.

Before the end of the day the new ladder was raised, to the great joy of Miss Griffin and Minna, who were thus released from confinement; and to the admiration of the Dyaks. Mr. Sinclair had not been idle during the day; he had held long conversations with the chief, whom he found quite capable of understanding the doctrine of Christianity; and not unwilling to believe that people so highly gifted and intelligent as the Europeans, must have certain knowledge of the true path to immortal happiness. Mr. Sinclair found the men all quick and apt in comprehending his discourse; the women were slower in understanding him, and somewhat indifferent about the subject. They seemed wholly occupied in their domestic duties; to fulfil which they believed they were only born into the world.

The simple people never appeared to consider that they were conferring, but rather that they were receiving, an obligation, in entertaining so many unknown guests for so long a period. The women attended submissively to their wants, and the men

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would have provided all the food they required, but the Europeans insisted on sharing the task of hunting the small deer and the huge wild hog; in taking the beautiful fish, as brilliant in colours as the parrots and lories, with which the river abounded; in collecting fruit and edible roots; and in cutting the ripe crops of rice when needed.

Then came the preparations for exportation. The delicate oil of the camphor-laurel was obtained by cutting open the trunk of the tree, and collecting it in immense flasks of bamboo. The white camphor had a high value in Japan and China, being greatly superior to the native camphor of those countries. Then the hollow trees were robbed of large quantities of honeycomb; the honey was drawn out for domestic consumption, and the wax melted into masses, for traffic. One day the whole community, accompanied by the strangers, went off to search for the edible birds' nests. As they drew near the mountains, Walter, ever on the watch for new animals, said,—

"Those little active birds must be the swallows; they have quite the English chirp, and see how they skim round in those familiar rings after the insects."

"You are right, my boy," answered Mr. Sinclair. "This is indeed the most valuable of the swallows, *Hirundo esculenta*, the bird which forms the edible nest of which our friends are in search, and which is so highly esteemed in China and Japan."

"But these birds have settled in the bushes on the face of the rock," said Walter. "Surely the swallow tribe do not build in bushes."

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Sinclair, "and therefore we must conclude there is some cave behind the bushes, for these birds invariably choose a rocky hollow for their colony."

The inquisitive boy climbed the cliff, and pushing aside the bushes, discovered a spacious cave, at some height from the ground, from which flew a number of

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the birds, as he entered it. The walls were stuck over with the same curious nests, as those which he had examined in the cave on "Miss Griffin's Island." These nests were placed in horizontal rows, close together, entirely round the cave, covering the walls from top to bottom, and had the appearance of hardened jelly. The Dyaks rejoiced in this rich treasure cave, and began carefully to remove a great part of the nests into large cane panniers which they had brought to contain them; and so delighted was Abdullah with the discovery of Walter, that he presented the boy with an uncut diamond of large size, which he had found, he told them, in a mine, and had kept some time in his possession; and Mr. Sinclair, who had some knowledge of mineralogy, declared the gift was too valuable to be bestowed on the boy.

"Why should it not be given to him?" replied Abdullah. "To me it is only a stone. An iron kettle would be of more use to me; yet the white men with whom I trade would scoff at me if I required them to give me a kettle for it, and would say, 'Where should Abdullah get a stone worth such a price?'"

Mr. Sinclair knew that in Lundu, and probably in other districts of Borneo, diamond-mines existed, and he thought it probable that Abdullah, though not employed himself in these mines, might have casually found the stone, which was certainly useless in itself, though he might be aware it had a conventional value in Europe.

"Will it be enough," said Walter, "added to the money we have left, to pay for the passage of us all in the ship?"

"Doubtless it might," answered Mr. Sinclair; "but it must depend on the generosity, honesty, and judgment of the person with whom we have to deal, whether he will receive it, on our word, in this rough state. Above all, remember Walter, we have not

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caught our captain yet, though certainly Abdullah seems to rely on his punctuality, and has no fears, except that our journey to the coast be interrupted."

Every arrangement was completed, the time for departure arrived, and Mr. Sinclair gave his last charge to his little community, who promised him to pray daily, as they had been taught, and to talk frequently of that great God who had promised salvation to all who sought him.

Tom had, with his usual ingenuity, constructed a light litter or palanquin of bamboo for Miss Griffin and Minna. It had two long poles, and was to be carried by four men; for, as a large party of the natives accompanied them to convey the articles of traffic, they were glad to assist in bearing the litter, rather than be delayed by the slow progress of those unaccustomed to walking. The native women were much amused at the sight of this conveyance, and though too strong and vigorous themselves to comprehend the necessity of such luxury, they kindly covered the roof, and lined the litter with fine matting. They had previously, from their scanty wardrobe, relieved the utter destitution of their guests, and would now have parted with every article of dress they possessed, if they had not been refused by their grateful friends, who deeply regretted they had not the means of requiting their generosity; the only return they could make being a needlecase with scissors and other implements, which Miss Griffin had in her pocket when the boat was lost, and a pretty blue scarf that Minna wore, which were rapturously received.

They carried with them a long string of monkeys, and a large cane cage filled with parrots, amongst which Minna's favourite travelled. The procession consisted of twenty natives, armed with spears, sumpitans, and arrows, all more or less laden with the productions of the land; then followed the European party, and the litter and its occupants, in which was

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also placed the cage of parrots ; and the indignant cries of the imprisoned birds, with the voluble and pertinent remarks of the educated parrot, would have been certainly distracting to the travellers, but for the charm of the lovely scenery, the fresh breeze from the sea, and the cheerful anticipation of escape from further peril.

It was but two long days' journey to the coast, which they reached as night fell, and rested at a spot well known to the natives, who soon removed a large stone from the entrance to a large light, airy cave, where they were accustomed to secure their valuable burthens till the traffic was arranged, and into which those who preferred a shelter from the night air retired.

Early next morning, Abdullah having discovered that the vessel he expected was lying off the coast, descended with one of his people and Mr. Sinclair to the shore, and signalled the ship. A boat was put out, which landed the captain and his mate, to whom Mr. Sinclair gladly introduced himself, as soon as he heard the English language, though spoken with a broad Scottish accent.

"If you're a Briton, sir," said the captain, "as you seem to be, it will be a piece of luck if you ken the tongue of these folks, for I've brought nae interpreter this voyage—they're a wheen lazy, hungry fellows, and a great expense."

Mr. Sinclair having signified his willingness to act as interpreter gratuitously, a few preliminary words passed between the traders before the chief went back to the cave, to order the articles of traffic to be brought down. Mr. Sinclair took the opportunity to tell his tale of distress, and to request the keen-looking bluff Scotchman to grant a passage to the party to some port from whence they could sail to India. Capt. Mackay (as he announced himself) gave a long whistle, knitted his brows, and after remaining some time in cogitation, said—

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"But ye dinna say onything aboot the siller, friend. Ye ken I'm just an agent, and nae mair; a paid sarvant to the owners, the varra excellent firm of Van Hookem and Co., and they look on me as 'sponsible for the profits to be made out on the voyage. Now, mon, it stands to reason, that it would be sma' profit to carry out folks wi' ne'er a bawbee in their pouch, and wha can gie nae solid security."

"That we certainly cannot do, Captain Mackay," answered Mr. Sinclair. "I can vouch that the parents of two of my young friends are wealthy, and would gladly pay liberally for any accommodation. Perhaps my assurance may not be sufficient to satisfy you; but, surely, humanity to your fellow-creatures in distress may induce you to risk the consequences. Here are my friends coming up to us, and, as you may see, two of the men are stout and active, and are reckoned skilful sailors."

"Nae doubt they'll say that mickle o' themsels," said the captain. "We're a' fain enough to gie our ainsels a gude word; and I'll not say but twa able hands might come in handy in these unsartain seas; but your woman-folks will be muckle fash, and sma' gain. But haud off a bit, I'll consider it owre; but let's get on wi' business first."

Mr. Sinclair felt greatly annoyed at the sordid meanness of the Scotchman, but deferred further remonstrance till the business of exchange, which occupied some hours, and was keenly and noisily conducted on both sides, was terminated. Miss Griffin and Minna were, during this time, seated under a cliff, uncomfortable and anxious; and the boys and sailors were making acquaintance with the mate, a Dutch sailor, who seemed to have voyaged to many lands. Tom knew a little Dutch, and the mate spoke a little English, so that they managed to understand each other tolerably well. From him they learnt that the ship was the *Amsterdam*, which had recently left a

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Dutch settlement in Bonthian Bay, in the island of Celebes, laden with coffee and soft sugar, and also with gunpowder, brought from Holland, these were to be exchanged at Canton for tea, with which they were to sail to Calcutta.

CHAPTER XXV.

Captain Mackay's Cabin—A hard Bargain—Miss Griffin's Traffic—The Voyage to the China Sea—Pirates in Sight—The beset Indiaman—Mackay's Opinions on Charity—A Pardonable Mutiny—The Quakers.

It was joyful news to the boys to learn the destination of the vessel; nor did they regret the length of the voyage, since they should thus see another new country; their only fear, when they heard the mercenary captain's dealings with the natives, was, that he should refuse to receive them on account of their poverty. Walter produced the diamond, and showed it to the mate, who, skilled in the value of precious stones, recommended the boy not to part with it, for it was really worth more money than Mackay could advance, even deducting reasonable passage-money; and he loved money so much that he might be tempted to overreach the boys when in his power.

When the traffic was ended, Mr. Sinclair returned to his intercession with Mackay, who said, "Noo, mon, I'll just tell ye what I'll do. I've got pens and paper in my cabin, and ye mun just set ye doon and write me oot a fair contract and promise to pay. I'll tak' a luik ower yer stock. There's yon twa stout hands, I'll not mind giving them their meat for their work; then

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for yersel, and these twa puny laddies—it's a lang voyage, and I ken they'll luik for mair than porridge; likely they'll ask flesh-meat and a drop whiskey owre that every day. Ye'll write me a note for fifty pund sterling for ye three men-folks, and, just to put it in cheap, I'll tak' these twa women, and thraw them in."

"Where, where, Tom?" cried Minna in alarm. "Does he mean to throw us into the sea?"

"Nay, nay, Miss; he means to take you as ballast-like," replied Tom.

"Sir—captain, I presume, you call yourself," said Miss Griffin, haughtily, "let me tell you that I and my pupil, Miss Gayton, are not to be treated as the mere uncounted rubbish of your cargo. This young lady is the daughter of the wealthy and powerful Colonel Gayton, and on his part I will enter into an engagement that he shall pay you fifty pounds for us alone, provided we are treated while on board with the deference due to our position, and restored to him in health and safety."

"That's a fair offer, sartinly, ma'am," replied Mackay. "Ye're a rare hand wi' yer tongue, and I'd niver be mad enough to objeck to all cevelity to them that comes down wi' their siller; but as to giving ye up sound and safe, I'll tell ye I'se niver enter into ony sich bond. God save us! it's a tempting o' Providence. How can I see what's marked oot for ye? Nay, ye'se have yer bit and yer sup, yer coffee slops, and yer minched collops, and what not, sich as my cook can mak' ye; but auld folks dee at sea as oft as ashore, and ships are not so firm as rocks. There's storms, and there's reefs, and there's pirates, and nane can tell what God's will may be when they set their feet on a plank o' wood wi' the sea roarin' under it. I'll enter into nae bond to gie ye up livin', let alone gie'ing ye up sound, I tell ye. I'll engage to do nae mair nor man can do."

"That, I am sure, is all the lady can require," said

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Mr. Sinclair, eager to anticipate any further reply from Miss Griffin. "Let us go on board, and we will enter into the engagement you require; and should we be mercifully spared, you shall not repent of your trust in us."

"Trust! trust!" answered Mackay. "That's a word I never liked: I pay cash down for all I buy, and I luik for cash down on all I sell. Nae mon leevin' can say that David Mackay was ever kenned to cheat or to lie; and an honest mon expecks honest company. I'm not the mon to do an evil turn to ane of God's creatures; and when I do them a gude turn, I luik to mak' an honest penny by it, and that's what I think all fair. So turn in, laddies; here hand owre yer women-folks. Ye'll no be fashed wi' mickle baggage likely."

There was no time for further discussion. The travellers took leave of the hospitable Dyaks, who, at the last, forced on their acceptance some baskets of fresh-gathered fruit; and then, with lightened hearts, took their seats in the boat, and were handed into the good ship *Amsterdam*, which they trusted would bear them to the homes they pined to reach.

The first thing the worldly-minded captain required of his passengers was, to follow him to his small but orderly cabin, where he, assisted by his mate, drew out the lawyer-like bills or agreements, which were signed by Miss Griffin and Mr. Sinclair on behalf of their wards, and which guaranteed the payment of Mackay's heavy charges. This completed, he shook hands with his new guests in great glee; and regardless of Miss Griffin's scornful demeanour, he took a survey of her and said,—

"Now I tak' a luik at ye twa ladies, I canna doot but ye'll be fain to do a stroke of business wi' me."

"Sir," answered Miss Griffin, coldly, "I am no trader."

"Nay, nay," roared he, with a laugh, that made her close her eyes, "I wasna luikin' oot for aught ye

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might have to sell. It's plain to see its a sma' matter ye're like to have to spare. But, my canny woman, wadna ye be wanting to buy a few duds? ye seem ill off."

This allusion to her tattered costume, and palm-leaf hat, was too much for the pride of Miss Griffin, who replied, "Can we not be shown to our apartment? I am not accustomed to coarse jesting."

"Nay, nay, ye needna turn sae testy, mistress," replied the captain. "Ye want claithes sairly, and I've gettin' claithes to sell. I needna rin after yer custom; for ye'll be fain to rin after me; ye'll not leet on mony slop-shops in the Indy Ocean."

"Oh, Miss Griffin," said Minna, "do let us have some dresses, if Captain Mackay will be kind enough to sell us some. You know, we have lost everything we had in the world; and, as we have not seen a looking-glass for a very long time, perhaps, you don't know that you are dressed just like a savage in matting and palm-leaves;" and the merry little girl laughed heartily as she looked at her governess and herself.

"And you can have my sovereigns, Miss Griffin," said Walter.

"Thanks, my dear boy," answered she; "but I cannot conceive that this man can have dresses suitable for ladies to wear."

Even Mr. Sinclair smiled, as he looked at Miss Griffin's scanty robe of matting; and he said to Mackay,—"Pray, sir, how does it happen that you have ladies' dresses to dispose of?"

"It's just a wee bit o' private speculation o' my ain," answered he. "There's nae shame in an honest screed o' trading, and I'll tell you how it cam round. A sister of mine that was in the manty-making line at Glasgow, fell in wi' a young fellow that had a scantling of book-learning; for he'd been brought up to enter the ministry, but his fancy ran a' for trade and seeing forrin parts, sae he bund himsel to a Dutch

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merchant at Glasgow town, and turned out a canny, hard-working laddie. He was a smart hand at larning tongues, and his folks thought fit to send him out to Amsterdam; so what did Maggie and he do, but get wed; for she was set on doing a stroke o' business hersel, and that's what she has done, brawly. I hadn't ony ship just then, sae they sent for me, and got me in wi' their masters, and they engaged me to tak' out ane o' their ships. I've had reet good luck, and made mony a profitable trip for them; and this last voyage, Maggie got me to fetch out twa or three boxes o' frippery, to help mak' these poor savages a wheen decent. I didn't get a chance of opening 'em oot yonder at Bonthian Bay, for the resident is a sharp, interfering fellow, sae I planned out to try China; but as you're bare enough, I'll be blithe to gie you the pick of them, cheap."

All this was greatly offensive to Miss Griffin, especially that bold figure of speech that she was bare; but before she had composed her reply, the active Scotchman had opened two large boxes, one of which was filled with useful cotton garments, the other with frippery, as he justly termed the gaudy dresses, caps, and hats it contained. Each article had a ticket with the price annexed to it, which Mackay pointed out as a proof of his honest intentions; and though these prices were extravagant, the temptation of supplying their destitution induced Miss Griffin to smother her resentment, and to pay the large sum he demanded for the replenishment of their wardrobe.

"Ye've gettin a gude bargain," said he. "I mak' leetle out of the job; just nae more than a sma' commission for my sarvices. We made a tight bargain, and them tickets is her ain handwritin'. Maggie's a keen body, and kens what's what."

Mr. Sinclair did not doubt the fact. It was plain the Mackays were a keen family, and their honesty of that skinflint character, that is satisfied

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with keeping out of the reach of the laws of man, rather than strictly conforming to the laws of God. Yet on the whole he considered it fortunate that they had obtained a passage with the man, on any terms. They had two neat, clean, small cabins, and the ship seemed in good order, though, as Tom said, "remarkable short-handed," a circumstance which they justly attributed to Mackay's niggardly economy. Miss Griffin and her pupil were glad to equip themselves in the garments they had purchased so dearly; but Minna treasured her palm-leaf and matting costume, to show dear papa and mamma how their little savage had been dressed. They enjoyed sitting down to table after a civilized fashion, and though the diet of the *Amsterdam* was somewhat economical, it was well cooked, everything was clean, and the wanderers had forgotten to be fastidious. They were all in good spirits, and had great pleasure in walking on deck and looking towards that coast of terror, which they could now pass without fear; for the vessel, fitted out for those dangerous seas, carried guns, the sight of which, they relied, would intimidate the pirates, who could not be aware the ship was so indifferently manned.

They threaded slowly through the multitude of isles that fill the Celebes and Sooloo seas, frequently seeing prahus hovering about for victims, and thankful that they were now under safe protection. And in their leisure their thoughts were turned to the future, with much anxiety mingled with their pleasant anticipations. The boys were sad when they reflected on the distress Mr. Thornville must have endured; Mr. Sinclair had some uneasiness about his subsistence in India; and Tom and Mike, besides the grief they should feel at parting from their young friends, had before them the uncertainty of obtaining employment.

"But all this care for the future is sinful, my dear friends," said Mr. Sinclair. "God will smooth our path, if we still rest on him, repentant of the past,

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resolute for the future. We have much to be thankful for. Captain Mackay is a worldly man, but he does not neglect the forms of religion, and thus preserves order and decency among his men. Let it be our work, by God's help, to warm this formal worship into a more perfect feeling of true religion. A wider field may soon be opened for our efforts in the new land we are seeking. God never fails to provide work for willing hands."

The useful pursuits and regular industry of his passengers won the respect of the money-loving Mackay, who seemed glad to consult them at all times. They entered without any interruption the China Sea, on which they continued to sail for many days prosperously; yet still Mackay's uneasiness daily increased. "Ye'll ken yersel', young man," said he to Tom, one day as they all stood on deck, "for ye 've ta'en this voyage afore, that them cut-throat thieves are thrangest and strangest hereaboot. Mike, mon, keep ye to the luke-out, and be smart to hail us, gin ye get a gliff o' the ne'er-do-weels."

"Ay, ay, master," answered Mike. "Sure, I'm the boy to be kaping my eyes open. And it's a good start we ought to be having av we're put to the chase; for this same *Amsterdam* 's a heavy craft, and there's not life enough in her to be working the ould hulk."

"Ye'll please to keep a ceevil tongue in your head," said Mackay, with some asperity, "and haud mair respeck for the *Amsterdam;* Van Hookem and Co. wad hae ye up for a libel, mon, if they kenn'd your allegations. I'll haud her up to rin like a red deer o' the muirs, gin she had a pirate at her heels."

"Then by the powers ye'd betther be starting her," cried Mike, "for there's some quare-rigged craft yonder away east."

"Give me the glass," said Mackay hurriedly; and then orders were given loudly to crowd all sail.

"What is the meaning of this commotion?" said

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Miss Griffin. "Has the man led us among the pirates, after all the stipulations I made with him? Remember, Captain Mackay, the agreement is, that the money shall be paid when my child is delivered in safety to her parents. You will forfeit all if you suffer us to be attacked by pirates."

"Haud your clishmaclavers! Is the woman demented?" replied he. "Think you, mistress, I hae no a life to lose as weel as ye; and think ye I'se gie up the gude ship *Amsterdam*, belonging to Van Hookem and Co., if I can help it. Gie them a wide berth, laddies; but rin oot the guns and load them; we can tak' out the charges gin we dinna need 'em. I'm not the mon to waste Van Hookem and Co.'s gude pouther, that I luik to sell for a profit at Canton. And when we come to guns, ma'am, it's just as weel that you and your bonnie lassie gang to yer cabin. Women folks are ay in the gate when feightin comes on. Put her to her speed, laddies,—she rins weel at a pinch." Tom had not a high opinion of the speed of the good ship *Amsterdam*. He looked anxiously and disapprovingly at the two small worn-out carronades, which he brushed and loaded, while Miss Griffin and Minna stood on deck, looking mournfully at the distant specks which they fancied seemed to grow larger.

"They'll not be fain to follow us up," said Mackay; "we've run a bit owre far north for them. We might fa' in sune wi' mair traders, sae they're safer on their ain ground. Noo, then, miss, hinny, ye're here yet."

"Because I see another ship, over yonder before us, Captain Mackay. Can that be a pirate, too?" said Minna.

He took up the glass, and then said, "Ye're reet, my hinny, there's a ship sure eneugh, and the mair the better; it'll gie the rogues mair work. But yon's nae pirate, my bairn; it's just a trader frae China, and they're making owre far east; fules, they'll rin smack on the thieves."

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"You ought to signal them, Captain Mackay," said Miss Griffin. "I know there is a system of hieroglyphic, or rather telegraphic signs, by which you communicate with distant ships. I wish you to inquire if the ship be bound to India, as in that case I and my charge will at once go on board it."

"Ye're gane clean daft, mistress," said Mackay angrily, "wi' your telegraphs and hiryglips. How's I to touch my siller, gin ye flit to yon ship that's rinning reet amang the pirates. Gang to your cabin, canny woman, and leave us to luik after our work. Now, Mike, man, what d'ye mak' on her?"

"She's a nate craft, master," answered he; "rigged like an Indy trader. Sure, then, she's sighted us, and now she's setting her flags for a spache of us."

"We've nae time to loss in speeches, mon," answered the captain sharply; "never ye heed the flags, luik after the rogues that are after us."

"Arrah, then, master," answered he, "it's making fast on us they're doing, and a purty swarm of them too! Musha! they've sighted the Indyman, and sure they're down upon her. Won't we be having a reg'lar scrimmage, anyhow?"

"Ye're out of your reckoning there, mon," said Mackay; "for what says Solomon, the wisest of men? 'He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.'"

"I trust you quote Scripture with reverence, Captain Mackay," said Mr. Sinclair; "but pardon me, if I observe that you err in the interpretation; for though Solomon ever commended peace, he never approved of cowardice. Surely it would but be true charity to support the Indiaman, if these wretches should attack it."

"Charity begins at home, sir," replied Mackay; "that's next to Scripture. Nane can say I ever turned my back on a gude deed when it wasna in the way of

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loss or danger. Frae the time that I was a laddie, I never thrust my head into a fray when I could find a bit way to rin aff; and it's just that's keeped me a' along in a hale skin: God be praised for it."

"You do well to thank God for your preservation from peril," said Mr. Sinclair; "but, therefore, it is more your duty to aid others in like perils. See! even my aged eyes can distinguish the fleet bearing down on the devoted vessel, which has some coloured signals displayed; doubtless to call on you for assistance."

The Indiaman now made up towards the *Amsterdam*, and being a swift sailor, was near enough to hail, while still the prahus, twelve or fifteen, crowded with armed men, followed, and were almost within reach of the guns. Mackay urged the men on to keep his ship flying before the wind, till the sailors with one voice declared they would work no more, if the master would not let them have a shy at the pirates. He stormed; called them mutinous dogs; and threatened he would flog every man of them; but Mike boldly said, "And where would we be to let ye do that same?" and Mr. Sinclair calmly showed him the prudence of some concession to the excited men; so, at length, he ordered the vessel to lie to, though at some distance from the stranger, and brought the guns aft, to be ready to assist. They had concluded that the Indiaman had six guns on board; but now Tom, skilled in such devices, declared that three, if not four, of them, were "quakers," as he called them—that is, wooden guns for show.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

The unfortunate Indiaman—From the Pirates to the Storm—The disabled Ship—The Boat sent out for help—The Floating Wreck—Land in sight—Cast away on an unknown Land—The hospitable Islanders—Where had they been thrown?

AND now the sympathizing passengers saw, with deep distress, that the pirates had surrounded the Indiaman, which, it was plain, would be their best prize, and, in defiance of some shots fired ineffectually, were preparing to board it.

"God help them!" said Tom, "they've some poor hands at their guns; every shot was wide. They cannot run now, they must fight for it; and every soul will be murdered!"

"But we can rin, my men," said Mackay, in great agitation. "We can do nae gude by biding nigh yon puir folk; but we may save oursels. Mak' sail, my laddies!"

"Let's give the dogs a flash at parting, at any rate," said Tom, in a discontented tone; and without waiting for orders, Mike and he fired the two guns over the decks of two of the prahus, making so much destruction that, if the guns of the Indiaman had been as cleverly worked, there might have been a chance of driving off the pirates. But it was now hopeless, they were already fighting on the decks of the boarded vessel; and knowing it was too late to aid them, the men resumed their duties with sad hearts, and, at the command of the captain, put the vessel to her speed, to escape from the same fate as the unfortunate ship they left behind.

"Av we'd put the snaking masther in irons," mut-

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tered Mike to his friends, "and made ourselves captain, wouldn't we have bothered the spalpeens, and, by God's help, we'd have cut ivery one of their ugly throats. Sure, then, all yon poor kilt fellows would have been fightin' now as fresh as roses; and niver a spar the worse in sorra a one of the ships, barrin the prahus, which same we'd have towed afther us to Cheeny, to show them what's in thrue British haroes. Musha, Tom! isn't he a polthroon and a mane Scotchman"

"My good friend," said Mr. Sinclair, "Captain Mackay is not necessarily a coward because he is a Scotchman. I am also of Scottish blood; and in the hour of need I do not think you would see me shrink from action. And remember, we had no right to imprison, or even to disobey, the master of a ship on his own deck, though perhaps we all regret his want of promptness. But this is now vain; let us rather pray for God's mercy on the unfortunate victims."

The pirates were too much engaged in subduing and spoiling the Indiaman, to have time to notice the smaller vessel, which was soon beyond pursuit; and though Mackay was silent and moody for a day or two, he alluded no more to the brief mutiny of his crew. He now became anxious to have his vessel trim, and his cargo in readiness for disembarkation.

"A fig for your pirates now," cried he in exultation; "for afore to-morrow neet I luik to our sighting Macao."

"But, captain," said Tom, in a low voice, "I don't like yon clouds. I've seen them shaped fellows before in these here seas, and no good came on them. I'd like to shorten sail."

"Bide a while, mon," answered Mackay; "time's money ony day. It's gude to mak' hay while the sun shines."

"But d'ye hear, captain, how the wind moans and talks!" replied Tom. "I've heard them as says as

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how it preaches warnings to them that keeps their ears open."

"Clishmaclavers, mon," said Mackay impatiently; "we're ahind our time as it is, and its nae like we can wait to be hearing at winds. Luik at the sea, mon; does it hear the wind, think ye?"

The sea was certainly smooth, and though the distant murmurings were still heard, a dead calm came on, and Mackay, to his vexation, was compelled to acknowledge the signs of the coming tempest.

"If we hadna been stopped by them whirligigs ye a' tuik up anent yon pirates," grumbled he, "we'd been clear o' this gale, and now we've got it. Ay, ay, shorten sail it is; be smart, laddies."

"How calm and still the evening is," said Walter, coming up to Tom. "You fancied that howling would have turned to a gale. And even now, I do believe Captain Mackay is suspicious, though the sea is smooth and the air still. Why are the men reefing the sails?"

"They know what they're about," answered Tom. "We shall soon be under as little working canvas as well can be, and be ready for the gale, come from what quarter it like—and come it will. Do you mark yon black bank of clouds, Mr. Frank? It's all in them."

"But there's not a breath of wind stirring now, Mr. Wiseacre," replied Frank.

"Musha! but ye'll be seeing it's not feathery boys like you," said Mike, "as will stand yon black fellow; ye'd betther be moving off below, my jewels. Arrah! sure ye're too late; isn't the train coming in on ye! Hould by the bulwarks for your lives, boys, or it's out on a cruise ye'll be without lave."

The startled youths grasped the bulwarks, and saw the careering black mass already over them, and the sea, a moment since so smooth, now white with foam, and boiling up till the spray dashed over the deck. The ship rose and fell as if it were a cork on those

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troubled waters; the roaring, shrieking wind drowned the shouts of the seamen; the spars creaked and bent, and threatened every moment to fall in wreck upon the deck. One huge mountainous wave met them, which the gallant vessel in vain tried to rise over, but was compelled to dash into it. Then the wave broke in thunder over the decks, sweeping away before it spars, casks, and all loose articles, tore down bulwarks, and carried with them four men into the wild abyss of the ocean.

It was vain to attempt to save the doomed men. The ship drove recklessly onward in the fearful gale; mast after mast fell, spar after spar was torn away, till the proud vessel drifted a helpless hulk on through the wild waters in an aimless, ungovernable course, amidst the deep lamentations of the unfortunate inmates.

Miss Griffin and Minna, clinging to the scattered furniture of their cabin, momentarily expected death; they were now joined by Mr. Sinclair and the two boys, who came to weep and to die with their dear friends. All exertion on deck was useless; the tempestuous gale still roared from the south-west; and Mackay in despair shut himself in his cabin, now walking to and fro, praying loudly, and now clinging to earth, as he sought up his papers and valuables, and placed them carefully about his person. Tom and Mike, with the few survivors of the crew, watched on deck in hopes that the storm might subside, and allow them to make some effort to amend their miserable condition.

"But blow high, blow low," said one of the sailors, "we must try to make off from this unmanageable hulk; for the first rock she runs foul on will knock her to bits. The long-boat will hold us all; let's make her ready, and as soon as the wind falls we'll launch her."

"Not till you get orders, I should think," said Tom.

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"I'll not stir till the captain gives the word," said the Dutch mate. "We're quite out of reckoning now, but I fancy we're somewhere east of the Loo-Choos. Now, our people have a settlement among these islands, and if we could make it out, and bring help, we might yet tow the old ship into port with her cargo. I'll hear what he says."

Mackay was at first doggedly opposed to any of the crew leaving the crippled vessel. He said that, as soon as the gale was over, he would have jury-masts raised, and would die sooner than not carry his freight into port. But the mate showed him that there was not a spar left on board fit for a mast, and that every hour was breaking her up more. At last he consented that his four surviving sailors, with the mate, because he spoke Dutch, English, and Malay, should set out to search for the Dutch settlement, and try to prevail on the settlers to lend them assistance to bring in the wreck.

Mackay then roused himself to go on deck, and try with Tom and Mike to ward off more damage, till help could reach them. But the long-boat was found to be so shattered by the violence of the storm as to be useless, and the smaller boat was ill-fitted for such a turbulent sea. Still, the men were determined to venture; they would not listen to orders; and when a slight abatement of the wind was sure, they launched the small boat and manned it, Mackay insisting on his mate having the command, and calling out, after he had left the ship,—

"Come out smartly wi' help; but mind, mon, ye mak' a tight bargain wi' yon resident. We've had owre muckle loss already; we mun niver put mair costs on Van Hookem and Co. Ye mun say, we canna afford mickle for salvage; they mun just do the job cheap, ye'll tell 'em; it's charity."

Mr. Sinclair observed, with astonishment and regret, the ruling passion of the worldly man predominating even in the hour when death seemed at hand.

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"If these brave men should be spared to reach a hospitable shore, Captain Mackay," said he, "let no time be lost in bargaining for that aid which must be unavailing if not promptly rendered. Alas! we might be only too thankful to barter this shattered vessel and its freight for a few yards of solid and safe land, as a refuge in this storm."

"It's coming again! down below all of you! hold hard, Mike!" shouted Tom; and, while Mr. Sinclair and Mackay hurried down to the lower cabin, a tremendous sea struck the disabled vessel. She was thrown forward till the sea swept the decks, and poured down the open hatchways, half filling her with water. Fortunately the vessel righted again, and Tom and Mike, who had with difficulty saved themselves by clinging to the broken masts, now went below, where they found Miss Griffin half senseless, the boys and Minna in great distress, Mr. Sinclair resigned to death, and Mackay again in moody despair.

"We must try the pumps, captain," said Tom; "but I fear the gear will be out of condition. If so, we must bale; for it's not long we can hold up our heads, if we cannot gain on the water; everything's afloat in the hold."

"The sugar, and coffee, and the gunpowder!" groaned Mackay.

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Tom, "the water's not nice; it makes all alike. But come and lend a hand, captain. Never say die, and we'll bale as long as we can stand it."

Even in the cabins there were some inches of water, and the hold was filled. But all set to work with buckets earnestly; and in two hours they had greatly reduced the water, and had the satisfaction of finding that the bottom of the vessel was sound; though, as the storm still raged, they had to dread another heavy sea. The hatchways were closed, to avert, as much as possible, further mischief; and such provisions as could

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be used were brought up to dry, for everything below had suffered more or less from the inundation. The wind still drifted the helpless ship towards the north-east; but none could tell their position. Another day and night passed drearily without any appearance of help; indeed, they could not but believe that the boat sent out must have gone down in the renewed tempest. Then the wind moderated, and the sun appeared, still no land was in sight, and the men returned to the examination of the condition of the ship.

No attempt could be made to set up masts and raise sails, to carry the cumbrous wreck into any port. They could only abandon themselves to the mercy of the wind and waves, and trust in God; but all considered it a duty to use every means to preserve it as long as possible from absolutely swamping. They succeeded in baling out all the water; and, but for the peremptory prohibition of Mackay, would have lightened it by throwing overboard the guns and heavy freight.

"Think ye, that I'se be that fule," said he, "as to fling awa' the property of Van Hookem and Co. Ye're mista'en, my men. I'se haud 'em fast, as is my duty, and wha kens? yon laddies may fetch us help yet."

But no help came: and the devoted hulk floated onward; but before evening land was joyfully sighted at the north-west. Full of hope they found a slender spar for a mast, and hoisted a light sail, under a favourable wind; and, while the long daylight lasted, they saw with delight the blessed land appear plainer every minute, and it was only when they drew near it that they remembered the perils of reaching it. In the dim light they could distinguish lofty rocks, against which they dreaded that they might be hurled in the darkness; for they had no means of anchoring the vessel; and, when night fell, they could only resign themselves to watchfulness and prayer. Before any gleam of

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morning light had appeared, they were suddenly all prostrated by a violent shock; they felt the grating of the hulk against the bottom, and they knew it must be stranded. They hastily lighted torches, and endeavoured to make out their position; they heard the dashing, roaring breakers, yet they felt the vessel was immovable; and they now discovered that it was wedged between two rocky walls, the waves dashing so furiously against the stern, that the experienced seamen knew well it must soon be broken up; and they waited in terror and anxiety till morning showed them that the cliff on their left hand was not more than ten feet above the deck. Tom and Mike speedily ascended, and looked round on a cultivated country, and saw, within two hundred yards of them, a village of low wooden houses, where large nets, spread to dry, denoted the inhabitants to be fishermen. As soon as they had reported their discovery, Mackay called out to them to go directly to the huts, and bring hands to save the freight of his ship.

"Won't it be the lives of God's poor craturs we'll be saving first?" said Mike. "Plase God himself, we'll do that same. Will ye be bringing up a rope, Mr. Frank, and we'll haul up the faymales and the ould jintleman."

But the old gentleman and the ladies did not like the idea of being hauled up the rough face of the cliff, so Tom and Mike descended to the ship, brought up a ladder from the hold; and refused to listen to the orders of Mackay, till they had placed all the party in safety on the rocks, except the anxious captain, who would not abandon the breaking vessel as long as a hope remained of preserving its contents.

By this time the broad daylight had brought out the laborious community of the village to their occupation. Men were seen issuing from the huts and proceeding towards a gradual descent to the shore, laden with nets and other fishing tackle. They were

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followed by dogs, which, quicker than their masters, discovered the strangers, and by their sharp barking directed attention to them. The men threw down their nets and turned back in haste to summon the whole community, and very soon a mob of men, women, and children, armed with spears and knives, surrounded the unfortunate castaways, chattering volubly in a language the Europeans did not understand. Mr. Sinclair, however, judging from the interrogative tone that they were asking questions, beckoned one of the men to the edge of the cliff, and pointed out the wreck to him, while, by signs, he tried to make him comprehend their unhappy condition.

Then Frank, who drew rapidly and well, sketched on a leaf of his pocket-book, the ship in the storm with the masts torn away, and the men clinging to the bulwarks. The people at once understood the meaning of the drawing, and regarded the artist with admiration; and the women burst out into unmistakable expressions of commiseration for Miss Griffin, Minna, and Walter; they ran to their huts and brought out large white cotton umbrellas, to shade them from the sun, then returned for hot bowls of tea, and boiled rice to offer to them. The men were welcomed with the same hospitality, and even Miss Griffin could not recognize these kind people as savages; indeed, she rather admired their costume, especially the mode of dressing the hair, much in the style of the last century in England, by drawing it all to the crown of the head in a large knot, through which was passed a brass or ivory bodkin, and some of the young women had white flowers placed amongst their dark tresses.

Their dress consisted of several loose robes of cotton worn over each other, with wide sleeves, partly sewed up at the bottom to form a pocket. A broad sash worn twice round the waist confined the loose, but not ungraceful drapery. The dress of the men was much the same, except that the girdle was narrower;

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both sexes were without stockings, but had the feet protected by a sort of raised sandal of woven straw, which had a band winding round the great toe, to keep it on the foot.

It was impossible to feel any alarm among these simple hospitable people, numerous as they were ; and Mr. Sinclair began to hope that they might obtain all the succour they needed, and perhaps, a guide to conduct them to some frequented port, from whence they might proceed on their interrupted voyage. He had at first concluded that they had been thrown on some part of the coast of China ; but Tom and Mike were of opinion that they had been driven much further to the east, and that they were now on one of the larger Japanese islands, "where," Tom said, "they'll neither let strangers in nor out."

Mr. Sinclair felt uneasy at this surmise ; but the reception they had met with, seemed so plainly to contradict it, that he trusted the sailors were mistaken. The greatest difficulties seemed to be, to make themselves understood by the natives, and to induce the obstinate Mackay to join them, and to relinquish the hope of saving the cargo, which must be materially damaged.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

The Mercenary Captain—Unlading the *Amsterdam*—An Alarming Interruption—A Deed of Blood—Captivity—A March in Bonds—A new and powerful Friend—Madsimano's Injunctions.

CAPTAIN MACKAY still remained on the wreck, walking to and fro, and calling out for hands to descend and assist him. Mr. Sinclair in vain remonstrated, and stated to him the impossibility of making the fishermen comprehend his desire, and the obvious necessity of attending rather to their personal security than to the worthless freight of the vessel. The obstinate man, however, refused to leave the wreck, and abused the whole party violently. At length Tom and Mike, who were good-natured fellows, descended to assist him to haul the casks and canisters from the hold, and then to draw them up the cliff. But when the islanders saw the huge packages brought up and placed on their territories, they seemed alarmed; much consultation took place among them, and finally, some of the young men withdrew; for what purpose none could ascertain, but the timid could not see their departure without uneasiness.

"I protest against this waste of time," said Miss Griffin. "Let us rather, guided by these peasants, make our way to some person of higher authority in this country, whose education may enable him to comprehend who we are; and who may protect and assist us. Captain Mackay is a man whose whole soul is absorbed in the sordid pursuits of trade. He is unfit for the position he holds."

"But he did us a good turn when he took us up,

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Miss Griffin," said Frank; "and I don't think he's half a bad fellow; only rather snobbish, and shabby about money; and I think it's all fair that we should go in with him, and work now."

And heartily the boys did work, hauling up huge bales, and casks, and chests, many of which were not worth the trouble they cost, but the economical Scot pointed out a use for everything. They were sorry to perceive that as the work proceeded they were left alone, the timid people appearing to be thoroughly alarmed at a landing which they probably believed to be an invasion. For two hours, while the rest laboured, Miss Griffin and Minna sat on the ground, glad of the protection of the umbrellas which the woman had left with them. They observed that the cottages were surrounded by gardens, in which were some fruit-trees; but no other trees were in sight. The land was all cultivated, waving with rice, grass, or tobacco, and ducks and guinea-fowls were rambling about. It was a quiet, pastoral scene, and they would have enjoyed it much if they could have talked with the cottagers; but any communication was impossible; and though Miss Griffin had sanguine hopes of succeeding with the higher classes, Mr. Sinclair did not expect that even her erudition would be of service to them.

While they were thus busily engaged, they saw a large body of mounted soldiers, in uniform, riding up, headed by a fine-looking man, wearing a helmet, decorated with gilded figures, and over his silk robes a sort of bright armour; two sabres hung from his girdle, highly ornamented, and it was at once obvious he was a man of rank, as his uniform was of richer materials than that of the rest. Alarm seized the Europeans, and they called on Mackay to join them, a call which he now speedily complied with, fearful that his goods should be abstracted.

The officer dismounted, consigned his horse to one of the soldiers, and approaching Mr. Sinclair, as the

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oldest of the party, made a polite salutation, and spoke some words in the same unknown language. Mr. Sinclair replied in Malay and in Hindoostanee, the languages he thought most likely to be known here, but in vain. The officer seemed annoyed; then he called to a superior-looking man in his train, who advanced and spoke some words in Dutch, which were easily understood by Mackay; and even the two sailors and Mr. Sinclair had some knowledge of that language, so that conversation was now carried on, though slowly, through the interpreter.

Mackay gave his account of their misfortune, and Mr. Sinclair heard with mortification that he mis-stated many facts; and in English he earnestly besought the captain to be perfectly sincere, or his statements would most likely be ruinous to them all; for he saw how craftily the interpreter cross-questioned not only Mackay, but also the two sailors, and how well he perceived the discrepancy in their evidence. The captain stated that he was bound to Kamschatka, but the storm had driven his ship from the course, and thrown it on the rocks; but the sailors declared they were not aware that Kamschatka was their destination. Then the interpreter inquired why there were women in his ship; and the man boldly replied they were his wife and daughter. The smiles and observations of the sailors at this statement enlightened Miss Griffin, who, in great indignation, contradicted the fact in such a distinct manner, that her tones and gestures sufficiently indicated to the hearers that Mackay had told a falsehood, and that they were, as Mr. Sinclair did not deny, passengers to China and India.

The commander of the soldiers, comprehending the falsehood of the captain, regarded him with indignation and contempt; he gave some orders to his soldiers, who advanced to seize and carry off the piles of merchandise. Absolutely maddened at the sight, the

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unhappy owner cried out for his friends to arm and help him, and snatching up a gun, he shot the captain to the heart. With loud cries the soldiers rushed forward, and would have at once sabred the whole party, but the interpreter took the command, and ordered them to forbear, but to make all the strangers prisoners. This was speedily effected: to oppose such a numerous force would have been hopeless. They were surrounded: the men were bound with cords, their arms behind them, their legs loosely tied together at the knees, and a cord put round each man's neck, with a long end, by which he was led, guarded by a soldier at each side.

The women were not bound, but, trembling and weeping, they were placed in a sort of open litter, which was carried on the shoulders of four men. Then the soldiers moved on with their prisoners, the procession being closed by another litter, on which was placed the body of the murdered officer, and a detachment was left behind to guard and bring forward the goods of the wreck.

They rode in single file past the fishing-village, where the people were gathered round their cottages regarding the strangers with horror now, for whom they had but a few hours before felt so much compassion, and who had repaid their forbearance by committing murder; and Mr. Sinclair felt, with distress and shame, that the rash deed of the angry Mackay, had subjected the whole party to the risk of death, or perpetual imprisonment. The obdurate worker of all this michief still continued furious, and, in the most violent expressions, showered abuse on the heads of the men who had robbed him of his goods.

"Musha! man alive! will ye be aisy," cried Mike. "Sure, isn't it blood ye've got for your powther; and it that would niver have made a crack, av ye'd flung it ivery grain on the kitchen fire, by raison that the say-wather had taken the life out on it. Sure ye've

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tried it on grand, masther, and have turned ivery soul of us into two-legged cattle, to be druv' to the butcher's slaughter-house. And why the spalpeens cannot be doing the job nately here on the spot, I'm not seeing at all, at all. Sure it would come aisier."

"Keep a close mouth, man," said Tom. "Can't you see as how them soldier fellows watch us, as it they could make out our words with their eyes. You'd as well not fire your guns till you come to close quarters; we'll want our tongues yet, it's all as is left to us, sin' they've lashed arms and legs. And Mike, man, they'll search us, so mind ye, when ye've a chance, hide your knife; it may come useful."

"Lave me to do that same, Tom," answered he; "won't I swallow it clane, but I'll chate the rogues; and Tom, sure, if we're gitten off, ye'll niver be thryin' to lade that unlucky spalpeen of a Scotchman with us. Arrah! he's like Jonah, and he'd sink the life-boat itself."

The interpreter who now commanded the party did not prevent the men from conversing, secure that they could not escape from their bonds, and their guards; and they beguiled the weary march by speculations and projects, always avoiding any discourse with Mackay, and certain that their words were not understood by their guards. Evening brought them to a small town which was fortified by a stone wall, and the gates guarded by soldiers. Here, after certain forms, they were admitted, and marched through several streets of neat wooden houses, amidst swarms of people, till they reached an enclosure of wooden walls, within which was a neat building of wood, into which they were led by the guards and attended by the leader. The prisoners looked round on the bare wooden walls and matted floor, but the place did not look like a prison, though it was not cheerful; and they were contented. Miss Griffin and Minna were handed from the litter, and conducted,

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pale and distressed, through the room where their fettered friends were, into another apartment merely separated from the first by a moveable screen about six feet in height.

In a short time, soldiers entered carrying bowls of smoking rice, on which were laid pieces of broiled fish, and with small wooden spoons they prepared to administer the food to the bound prisoners, who, hungry as they were, rejected with disgust this mode of refection, and Mr. Sinclair, addressing the interpreter, said—"I beseech you, sir, to permit our arms to be released, that we may feed ourselves like human beings. We are unacquainted with the laws of this unknown country, where our misfortunes have cast us; but we protest against this cruelty; and appeal to your highest authority to judge our case. We were merely passengers in the wrecked vessel, and could not be in any way answerable for the mad act of the irritable master. In our country, powerful England, and in all the civilized nations of the world, the unfortunate ever meet with kindness, and even the criminal are treated with humanity. Have we fallen among savages, who thus violate all social laws?"

The man seemed moved at these words, but replied, "What can I do? my life would be forfeited if my prisoners escaped. I have dispatched messengers to report my proceedings at the town which we shall reach in two days. I am not really in authority; I merely supply the place of the man your companion murdered. I have no warrant to release you."

"Neither had you any warrant to seize and bind innocent people," answered Mr. Sinclair. "I warn you that we are the subjects of a nation which will not suffer our wrongs to remain unavenged."

The interpreter was now greatly agitated, and said, "I cannot suffer the shedder of blood to be released." He then gave some particular orders to four of his soldiers, who forthwith led away the struggling

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Mackay, who expected he was going to execution, to another apartment, also separated from the first by a screen, but on the opposite side to that which was occupied by the ladies; and from whence the cries and execrations of the unhappy man appalled his passengers. Then their arms were released; but they had been so tightly bound, that it was long before the poor prisoners could bring them round to their natural position, and the severe pain this occasioned, forced the tears from the eyes of Walter. In the mean time, more mats were brought in and piled up for mattresses, and they saw two women pass through, laden with food and mattresses for Miss Griffin and Minna, with whom they remained as guards.

The captives were now able to rest their wearied limbs, and, as soon as they could use their hands, to eat their portions, with the addition of cups of tea, which, though without milk or sugar, afforded them great refreshment. After this supper, the ends of the cords which were round their necks were attached to a high beam, their ancles were tied, and they were ordered to lie down and sleep, a command they would gladly have complied with, but their fettered limbs, the frightful annoyance of the halters, and the sight of the guards seated round them in the dim light of an oil-lamp, were not circumstances favourable to repose. But Nature at length demanded her rights, and they sunk to sleep.

They were awaked in the morning by their guards, more rice and tea placed before them; their ancles were released, but their arms again bound; and then they once more proceeded on their melancholy march. Towards noon, the heat became so excessive, that Mr. Sinclair at last staggered and fainted, and the soldiers were halted, till a party went off to some neighbouring village for a rude wooden litter, with a cotton canopy. In this, after his recovery, Mr. Sinclair was placed, and the guards held large white umbrellas over the

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rest of their prisoners,—a grateful relief from the scorching rays of the sun. They passed through several populous villages, where the peasants gathered round them with tears and exclamations of pity, and brought to them bowls of rice, cups of tea, and ripe strawberries and raspberries, which the exhausted travellers, subdued and exhausted by heat and thirst, gladly allowed the compassionate people to put into their mouths.

They stopped to eat but once, and then continued their weary march, till Walter fell exhausted, and had to be placed in the litter with Mr. Sinclair. As they entered a small town in the evening, they were met by another troop of soldiers, commanded by a noble-looking young man, splendidly attired, whom the interpreter and guards received with the most profound respect. He looked with apparent disgust at the bonds of the pale, exhausted prisoners, and questioned the interpreter in a sharp tone, who replied with hesitation and humility. Then, commanding all to follow him, he rode through the streets to a large house situated in a court, where they halted, and the prisoners were led into a large painted hall. When Mr. Sinclair and Walter were lifted from the litter, half dead, the officer stamped furiously as he issued immediate orders to remove the ropes. The prisoners were relieved from all bonds, and the ropes removed entirely from their necks.

He then, with much politeness, handed the ladies from the litter, placing his hand caressingly on the long waving hair of the child, as he led her by the hand to an interior apartment, followed by Miss Griffin, making the experiment of her polyglot knowledge on him as they went on. He then returned to the hall, and after putting some questions to the interpreter, he asked Mr. Sinclair in the Dutch language to tell him how they came to land on the coast of Niphon, into which strangers were forbidden to

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enter. Mr. Sinclair briefly and frankly told him their unfortunate story. He frowned when he heard of the violent deed of Mackay, and said, "He has shed blood; he will be judged by the law, and must die. You have no reason to fear for your lives; but our laws permit no strangers to remain at liberty in the country; more especially the dangerous people called Christians."

He then ordered Mackay to be removed to another apartment, and guarded, and asked Mr. Sinclair if he desired more or separate accommodation; but he begged that his two pupils and the faithful seamen might remain with him.

"I must leave guards to watch you," said the officer; "but I will take care you shall have good food and every indulgence I dare grant while you are under my care. To-morrow night I must consign you to other hands, and I fear the governor of the town is somewhat strict."

Mr. Sinclair sighed at this prospect, and their friend took leave of them by shaking hands, smiling, as he said he knew such was the European fashion. Soon after a number of clean mats were brought and arranged for them to rest upon, and several small trays were set before them, containing little lacquered dishes of fish, fowl, and vegetables, cooked in delicious sauces; sweetmeats, fruit, and tea with sugar; there were also some cups of a spirituous liquor they named *saki*, which Mr. Sinclair, in the name of the rest, declined. To the great amusement of the boys, ivory chopsticks were given them to eat with; but they were so particularly unskilful in the use of them, that they were compelled to use their fingers. Their guards had, however, provided them with a large bucket of water and some wooden bowls for washing; so their primitive mode of feeding was less objectionable; and they enjoyed their supper, and slept off the fatigues of the day.

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Their protector, whose name, he told them, was Madsimano, came early to visit them, and asked many questions about their country, its learning, and its customs. His interest for them seemed hourly to increase. He called Mr. Sinclair "Father," and the boys "Brothers;" and lamented that he might be compelled to leave them at the next town; for, in the islands of Japan, no subject knew where he might be, or what he might be ordered to do to-morrow. He told them he was rich and noble; and though he was a soldier, he had yet time to read many books. He loved knowledge, and now that he knew his friends were not Dutch, he desired to learn the English language, and asked them many words, which he repeated accurately, and laughed as his teachers attempted the corresponding Japanese word.

When they set out, Madsimano ordered horses to be given to Mr. Sinclair and the two boys, and also that all the prisoners, except Mackay, should be unbound, as the strength of the guard precluded any hope of escape. He rode with them himself, and rendered the journey absolutely pleasant by his cheerfulness and attentive kindness. Minna laughed continually at his attempts to pronounce English, the rugged consonants being his greatest difficulty. Nevertheless, his perseverance and retentive memory enabled him to collect a large stock of words during the day, though he was still compelled to converse in Dutch, which he spoke very fluently.

"I am delighted to be able to communicate with you," he said, "without the aid of an interpreter. I do not like that class of men. Those who compose it are usually either our own countrymen who have been exiled for their offences and then pardoned to be useful, in fact, slaves and spies of government; or they are foreign prisoners, who are ready to betray either side to forward their own escape. We, who are educated in the high schools, fervently hope that a

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day is approaching when we shall no longer be isolated from the rest of the world, nor obstructed from learning the languages and sharing the advantages of other nations. We need improvement. I cannot think the system is right which governs by fear. We become, without allowing it to ourselves, artful and false. Even now I was planning to affect indifference towards you, that I might not be suspected if I obtained leave to study English with you. In such a case, how would an Englishman and a Christian act?"

"That depends on the individual character of the actor," answered Mr. Sinclair. "It is the nature of man to be false and cowardly. It is the spirit of the Christian religion that endows him with truth and resolution; and, according to the progress of this holy spirit in his soul will the man be weak or strong."

Madsimano reflected on these words; then he said, "Some time I will have you speak more on this subject; I cannot consider it now."

"I could relate to you the story of a great man, a governor," answered Mr. Sinclair, "who listened for a time to the words of one of the earliest teachers of Christianity; but finding they touched his conscience, he said, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee.' Alas! that convenient season never came, the man who deferred his repentance, died in his sins."

"What were the words he refused to listen to?—I will hear them," said Madsimano.

Then Mr. Sinclair ventured to broach the forbidden subject, and struggling against the difficulties of a strange language, he poured into the eager ears of the listener, the wonderful history of that great and mysterious God, who condescended to live, and suffer, and die, on earth; that through His death all who believed in Him might be pardoned, and share with Him eternal life.

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The roads over which they travelled were excellent, shaded by trees planted in rows on each side; and the travellers as they discoursed on holy and peaceful things, thought the journey easy, and the day short. When they reached the large town on the coast which was to be their present resting-place, Madsimano said,—

"I will see you again, my beloved friends, no obstacle shall prevent me. Do not despair; all may yet be well. You will be imprisoned here; you may even be treated harshly. But be patient; I am your friend, your protector—and, if needed, I may be your assistant. You will be separated; the criminal will be confined apart; the ladies will probably be released and embarked on some vessel bound for their destination. You will be questioned; be discreet, but sincere; patient, but hopeful; and your powerful God will save you."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Mike and his Captain—The new Prison—Men Cages—An Appeal to Mackay—A fearful Night's Work—A solitary Voyage—Wholesome Reflections—The Port in sight—The Dutch Vessel—The Rescue.

WHEN the procession drew near the walls of the town, they rested; for it was thought prudent to rebind the prisoners before they were taken through the crowded streets; but Madsimano commanded that the bonds should not be so tight as to give pain. While they were mingled together in some confusion, Mackay whispered to Mike,—

"Gie the rope ahint me a slash wi' yer knife, laddie;

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but dinna cut it through. I need a bit o' ease for my arms ; they're just clean dead."

The compassionate sailor managed to get close behind the culprit, and unperceived by any one, to cut the rope which tied his arms back nearly through ; then, hiding his knife, he took his place and submitted to be bound himself. Madsimano had let Frank know that they would probably all be searched that night or next morning, and intimated that if they had anything they wished particularly to retain, they had better secrete it—a precaution they had previously agreed to take, and Walter even put his diamond into the hands of his friend to preserve it.

The town they now entered was surrounded by walls, except where it opened to the sea, which rolled below the rocks on which it stood, the shore being reached by flights of steps down the solid rock. It was to the heights above these cliffs, that the prisoners were conducted through mazy, narrow, populous streets, amidst the wailings of women, who from their dwellings looked on the sad procession, and wept to see the fair young boys led, like beasts to the slaughter, towards that dread prison that all shuddered to look upon.

It was surrounded by a high wooden wall, the portal of which was guarded by sentinels ; through this they entered into a large court, and saw before them a long, barn-like building of wood, with small loop-holes barred with wooden rails, and a strong door, before which a guard of soldiers was placed. Here Captain Madsimano stopped to speak to one of the guard ; and then turning to the prisoners, he told them they could not be examined till next morning, as it was too late for official business, but he had ordered their bonds to be removed.

They were conducted into the huge building, where in a vestibule, or hall, the ropes were removed from the arms and legs of all but Mackay ; and when the

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guards brought lamps into the hall, the startled prisoners saw with horror that the vast building enclosed a number of separate compartments—in fact, gigantic wooden cages, grated with strong wooden rails. Into one of these the wretched Mackay was thrust, fettered as he was. Mr. Sinclair had one to himself, about six feet square, and as many in height; the two boys had the next, and the two sailors one beyond. These apartments, or stalls, were furnished with mattresses and cotton coverlets, the floors were matted, and a wooden bench placed for a seat. In each was a grated opening about five feet from the ground, which admitted light and air, but the peculiar form of their prison, or cage, was repugnant to their feelings, and destructive of all hope of escape.

After they had remained a short time alone, the guards brought to each of them a tray containing the usual large ration of rice and fish, with some pickled vegetable, and hot tea. No one was able to consume the ample provision offered to him, except Mackay, whose tray was sent out empty. Mr. Sinclair was glad to see that women were carrying provision along the outer hall, as he was thus satisfied that Miss Griffin and Minna, about whom he had become uneasy, were certainly under the same roof as the rest, though he trusted more pleasantly accommodated.

"Master Frank," said Tom, "see if you and Walter cannot sink your knives into the ground underneath these mats; Mike and I sounded, and found we could anchor, and we've done it. And now that we've given you a leaf out of our log, be smart, and pass the word to the old master.

The boys were able, by the dim light of an oil lamp, to lift a corner of the loose matting, unnoticed by the guards; and finding the ground beneath soft and sandy, they plunged their knives entirely into it, marking the place, and begged Mr. Sinclair to do the same. But the soldiers were seated immediately

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before his cage, or *raya*, as they called it; and he was not so active as the young men; moreover, he was not anxious to risk the attempt, for he had only a common pocket-knife, which could not be suspected to be an offensive weapon.

Night had now come on, and four guards only were left in the hall, who were seated opposite to the prisoners, leaning lazily against the wall, smoking, when Madsimano entered. The guards sprung to their feet, and relinquished their pipes at the sight of the officer, who slowly paced the hall, speaking a word in an indifferent tone, to each prisoner as he passed. As he returned, still moving along, he said, in the same tone to Mr. Sinclair, "I know I am watched. In this country every man is a spy on some other, and I dare not speak much, lest I be suspected. I find the governor prejudiced; and he is known to be severe. You must be strictly judged by the immutable laws of the country, but he is the interpreter of these laws. You, alone, must be the speaker, remember; the rest do not understand Dutch."

"I believe they know very little of the language," answered Mr. Sinclair; "but even if they were examined, I am confident they would only speak the truth."

"Alas!" replied Madsimano, "truth is with us clothed in so many garbs, that if the truth of your followers differed but in the colour of a *kamisamo* from your own words, the effect would be fatal to your evidence. It is best that they should be silent. For the criminal himself, it matters not: he is doomed! he has shed blood unnecessarily."

"May I not be allowed to speak with him of his fate?" said Mr. Sinclair; "and try to prepare him for death."

"You are at liberty to converse as you like in the prison," answered he; "and you can do it safely, for the guards do not understand your language. But why do you wish that he should know his death is at

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hand? Is he a brave? Will he dare to use the knife himself? In our country such a privilege is only granted to the nobles. He must be searched."

"My dear friend," replied the good man, "a professed Christian may in a moment of rash passion shoot one of his fellow-creatures; but in a calm moment, he would shrink with horror from the deeper crime of suicide, after which there could be no repentance. Leave the man in peace to-night. I will urge him to repentance and prayer; but be assured he will not take his own life."

"I am content," said the officer. "After this night he will be more carefully guarded. I will let him sleep in peace, and hope you will do the same."

After he had departed, Mr. Sinclair called on Mackay to warn him that death would probably be the punishment of his crime, and besought him to repent, and join in prayer with his friends for the pardon of this sin, especially.

"God forgie me a' my sins," answered the man. "We're a' owre ready to rin into sin, Mr. Sinclair; but I canna see whatna reet that rogue had to lay hands on my goods. I'se pray along wi' ye, my hinnies; but they've not gettin their claws into me yet."

There was a delusion, or desperation, in the unfortunate man's mind that distressed Mr. Sinclair, who earnestly endeavoured to persuade him to throw himself on the mercy of his Saviour, and humbly to repent and submit to his inevitable sentence.

"Ay, ay, ye're reet," replied he. "I ken I was clean mad when I lifted my hand again that thief; but I couldna forget I was responseeble to Van Hookem and Co.; and I couldna bide to luik on their stuff being rived awa'. Now, master, let's hear your prayers, and God send me to profit by 'em, and bless you a'."

The guards heard with astonishment the voice of Mr. Sinclair loudly raised in solemn prayer, and the

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regular murmur of the responses; they even seemed somewhat awed, for the voice of prayer cannot be misunderstood even by the most ignorant. Then followed that sleep which gives pleasure to the happy, and a blessed respite to the suffering and sorrowful.

The guards stretched on the mats of the hall were soon snoring profoundly; and one after another the weary prisoners sunk to repose, though the hourly disturbance of the sentinels outside, who proclaimed the hours by rattling pieces of wood in a peculiar manner, which time alone taught the prisoners to comprehend, and the anxiety he felt for his friends, kept Mr. Sinclair long awake. Once he fancied, by the dim light of the lamp, that he saw the unhappy criminal still moving about, and again he heard some muffled sound, which agitated him, when he remembered Madsimano's doubts. But finally he also slept, and the prison was still.

There was, however, one who neither slept nor rested one moment. The sagacious Scot foresaw his fate if morning dawned on him still a prisoner; and he had, hours before, planned an attempt which he did not even hint to his friends. No sooner had the guards betaken themselves to repose, than with strong effort he broke the half-severed rope that held his arms; and after many painful attempts, brought the stiffened joints to their natural position. Then he drew the long, sharp knife, which he had kept hidden under his vest, and cut asunder the several thongs wound round his legs and body; the long rope, which had encircled his neck, he preserved, binding it round him.

Then warily drawing under the grated window, he rapidly and silently cut through the bamboo bars at the bottom, and saw, to his great satisfaction, he could withdraw them from the sockets in which they were loosely inserted at the top. The night was perfectly dark, and he heard no steps of the patrol at the back of

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the prison, which, from its situation over the cliffs, they probably considered secure. His next step was to roll up an old piece of matting, and envelop it in his pea-jacket, stuffing out one of the sleeves ingeniously with pieces of the matting. This effigy he placed on the bed, drew the coverlet half over it, extending the stuffed arm outside, and throwing the other sleeve, as it were, over the face.

He looked with complacency on his work, which was sufficiently deceptive in the gloom of his prison, for the single seal-oil lamp was placed between the guards and the raya of Mr. Sinclair, situated on the opposite side of the entrance, and so far removed from that of Mackay, that his movements were quite unseen. The rice and fish he had reserved from his supper he rolled in a handkerchief and placed in his pocket, and, one after another, withdrew the bars, holding them in his hand, till the aperture was wide enough for him to pass his body through. He contrived to effect this at the moment that the clattering sticks, proclaiming the hour, drowned all other sounds; and once in the court, he replaced the bars, then cautiously crossed to the wall, which was nine feet in height, and finished by a bamboo *chevaux-de-frise;* but this was a slight impediment to an experienced sailor. He speedily crossed it, and found himself on the narrow edge of the lofty cliff.

He crawled along this perilous path for some distance, till he had left the town, and entered a wood, which allowed him to rise and walk rapidly forward. He had gone two miles before he deemed himself quite free from the watch of the town; then seeing two fishing-boats moored at the shore, he easily let himself down the steep cliff to the narrow beach, where, hidden from all observation by projecting rocks, he unmoored the best of the boats, in which he found oars, sails, fishing tackle, an earthen jar filled with water, and, in a locker, some dried fish. All had been prepared for an early trip; and though even the dubious principles

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of honesty professed by Mackay felt a qualm at the robbery, he quieted his conscience by remembering all that had been stolen from himself. The tide was favourable; he got the boat off; and as he took up the oars, and made out to sea, he once more felt a free man, and forgot in his exultation, his own guilt, and even his responsibilities to Van Hookem and Co.

He had, on the previous day, craftily obtained much information from the interpreter, who, having considerable employment among the Dutch, was not averse to talk to one, as he believed, of their nation. He had learnt that the town where the prison stood was on the east coast of the island, and considerably to the south of Jeddo, the capital. He also ascertained the exact position of Desima, the Dutch settlement in the harbour of Nagasaki, the distance, and other circumstances connected with the Dutch trade. It was, therefore, towards Desima he proposed to shape his course, as soon as he had gone far enough out to sea to be beyond observation. If he should be fortunate enough to fall in with a ship, he had no fear of being taken up; if not, it was but to try his fortune at the Dutch settlement, though he well knew how closely it was watched.

Mackay was a keen and mercenary man, but was not without that deep religious feeling which is early impressed on the people of his country. He abhorred his crime, and was deeply penitent; but his thoughts of repentance were for ever crossed by plans of future gain to make up for his losses. His money, bills, and valuable papers, were all hidden beneath his vest, and he secretly congratulated himself on his shrewdness in escaping alike examination and punishment.

"And if it please God," thought he, "that I get clean awa', my first care will be to stir up Van Hookem and Co., to work 'em up to an action again, yon roguish Japanese, if they winna pay damages for their thefts and spoliations. And then, gin I can rouse up any

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gude bodies, I'd be fain to luik after yon puir folk in prison; and it's like they've friends that might fit out a ship to gang claim 'em. And gin I carry out this gude turn for 'em, they canna objeck to cash my bills on 'em."

Amidst his reflections, he had not neglected, as the wind was favourable, to hoist the sail; and before daylight he was considerably south of the place of his imprisonment. He had, fortunately, a pocket-glass about him, by aid of which he saw and avoided several islands, and kept safely from the land. Through the long day he sailed or rowed, as the wind answered, carefully portioning out his food and water; and venturing on a south-west course towards the place of his destination, he constantly looked out for the hoped-for ship: but in vain.

Another long night, in which he dared not sleep, almost exhausted him, and gratefully, some hours after, he saw the land, which he recognised as the island of *Kiousiou*, where, in the bay of Nagasaki, lies the prison-like islet which the Dutch traders are allowed, under severe restrictions, to inhabit. Sailing round the south of the island, he dreaded to approach, though it was his last hope; but lay off for some time watching through his glass, when, to his great delight, he saw a ship issue from the mouth of the bay and direct its course to the open sea.

He waited in breathless anxiety; he would not even row up to meet the vessel, till it was full three miles from the bay; then hoisting the sail, with his blue handkerchief as a signal, he drew nearer. His signal was seen, the ship lay to till he came up, and saw with thankfulness it showed Dutch colours; and no sooner had he stepped on board than he was greeted by the captain in the Dutch language.

"What! Mackay, is that you? How do you come here, and what has become of the good ship *Amsterdam?*"

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"I have lost everything!" cried Mackay; "imprisoned and robbed! Carry me off from this infernal coast, if you can; and give me a berth where I may get a little sleep, I have neither rested nor slept for three days."

"Then I'll be bound you are the prisoner," answered the Dutch captain, "who has been sought for and denounced at Nagasaki, and in our dismal quarters at Desima. I read the description of the fugitive, but could never have recognized any resemblance to you in it. What a lucky fellow you are to have just fallen in with us here; if you had entered the bay, you would have certainly run your head into the lion's mouth."

But they were now happily beyond the reach of the keen police of Japan, and Mackay was rescued, to make his report to Van Hookem and Co., and to begin a new course of money-making.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A Return to the Prisoners—The Discovery in the Morning—General Dismay—Miss Griffin's Plans—A Procession through the Streets—A Court of Justice—The Examination of the Prisoners—The Separation—The Prospect of a long Imprisonment.

In the meantime, the unconscious fellow-prisoners of the fugitive slept soundly till the morning-call roused their guards, and the attendants entered with bowls of water, and towels of thin paper—which material seemed here to be put to a variety of uses. An hour after this the breakfast trays were brought in, and the guards,

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supposing Mackay was still sleeping, entered his latticed cell to rouse him. The next moment cries of dismay reached the ears of the rest of the prisoners, and Mr. Sinclair, in deep sorrow for his interference the preceding evening, believed that the man had really found means to commit suicide. Just then Madsimano came into the hall, and Mr. Sinclair besought him aloud to ascertain whether Mackay was dead; but the wretched guards, trembling with terror, pointed out the broken bars and the empty cell.

"Wretched idlers!" said Madsimano to them; "you have sacrificed our lives as well as your own. These unhappy prisoners may now abandon every hope of release, for we shall all be implicated in this disgraceful affair. Away! and report your negligence to your officer, that he may order pursuit; the man cannot have gone far, and it is only his recapture that can save your lives."

The despairing men slowly withdrew, and were replaced by other soldiers from the court. Then Madsimano said to Mr. Sinclair, "For your own sake, my good father, let me hope that the man did not communicate his intention to you."

"Though we had much conversation last night," answered he, "I never for a moment suspected this. I must own that I heard him move about in the night, but I attributed this to his natural restless disposition. I believed his bonds must have rendered all escape impossible."

"So they would if he had not had assistance," replied Madsimano; "and suspicion must fall on you. Your conversation with him, in a strange language, will be registered against you. Pardon the necessity; but I must show my zeal by ordering you all to be searched before you appear before the governor."

No one could eat breakfast. Apprehension and distress at seeing their good friend Madsimano so dejected, checked all appetite. As they sat in sad

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silence the pretty head of Minna appeared above a screen which divided the hall, and she called out,—

"Dear papa Sinclair, will you ask Captain Madsimano to come and see us? We are so lonely; and Miss Griffin is so angry with the Emperor of Japan, and with everybody else. She says she has a plan for our escape, and if she might have writing materials she would sketch it out and send it to you. I have climbed on a bench that I may see all your dear faces again through these ugly bars."

The kind-hearted Japanese officer went forward to speak to the ladies, and Miss Griffin immediately said to him, "Will you assist us to escape, Captain Madsimano?"

"Certainly not, madam," answered he; "I am a soldier of the Emperor of Japan, and must do my duty. I pity you; but, alas! I cannot aid you. But be patient; you have nothing to dread. The government does not fear female conspirators; and your case is already under favourable consideration. I regret to say you must appear before the governor of the town today, to answer certain questions; may I suggest that your answers be brief and discreet, though perfectly sincere."

"I rejoice in the opportunity," said Miss Griffin. "I shall certainly state my wrongs truly; but no consideration shall deter me from warning your inhospitable nation of the danger of their injustice to English ladies of our rank."

"Believe me, dear madam, the less you say the better," said Madsimano.

"I am a woman of education, sir," answered she, "and feel competent to arrange my own plans, and to speak without the need of a prompter before the officials of this barbarous country."

"My dear sir," said Madsimano, when he returned to Mr. Sinclair, "your women are like ours, I see; rash and profuse in words. Prevail on yon lady, if possible, to control her tongue, if she values her liberty.

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And now, my good friends, I must leave you. I may not be near you in the court; but do not betray your knowledge of any Japanese words, and may your great God protect you in your trials."

After the departure of Madsimano, the cells were visited by a party of respectable and civil police, who quietly searched the prisoners, and took away the contents of their pockets. Then they were ordered to follow their guards—the men being led by a rope which encircled the body. The women were carried in a litter. It was not without a certain amount of pleasure that they left their gloomy lodging, and emerged into the open air. They waited in the court till the captain of the guard arranged the procession. A line of guards marched first, armed with muskets and spears, then followed the prisoners in single file, each led by a soldier, and flanked on each side by another. The litter came next, and another body of guards closed the procession.

They issued from the court and proceeded slowly through the long narrow streets, where the windows and doors of the houses were thronged with heads, and even the shops filled with various kinds of merchandise were neglected, while the tradesmen stood outside to gaze on the strange people—some with looks and words of vindictive hatred, but the greater part expressing commiseration for the unhappy prisoners. With astonishment they passed from one crowded street to another, and the swarms of people would have led them to suppose this to be the capital city of the empire, had not Madsimano assured them it was only the seat of a provincial governor. At any rate, Mr. Sinclair thought Miss Griffin must be convinced now that she was not thrown among a nation of savages; for the order, the neatness, and even the splendour of the houses, and the handsome dresses of the people, showed the unexpected presence of complete civilization.

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At length they reached the lofty walls of a fortified building, guarded by armed sentinels, all seated on mats—the custom of the country,—who admitted them, through a series of courts, into a spacious hall, the floor of which was covered with fine matting; the ceiling, and the moveable screens which formed the walls, were painted with representations of trees, houses, and animals, in gorgeous colouring and gilding, after the Japanese fashion. The windows were not glazed, but admitted a subdued light through transparent paper, painted with curious kaleidoscope patterns.

On an elevated dais, covered with carpeting, was seated, with his legs folded under him, a fine-looking man, who, they concluded, was the governor. His outer ample black silk robe was bound round his waist by a girdle of embroidered silk, in which were conspicuously placed two sabres and a short dagger—the hilts richly ornamented with gold, and the sheaths worked in figures of gold. Several officers were seated round him and behind him, officials with writing implements—the clerks of the Court; and sentinels were seated all round the platform. There was no furniture whatsoever in the hall, except some low benches covered with scarlet cloth, bordered with gold, on which the prisoners were permitted to seat themselves. Miss Griffin and her pupil were led into the court by Madsimano, who seated them on one of the benches, and saluting the governor, he introduced the ladies by pronouncing their names in Japanesed English, Mees Creefy and Mees Cato.

Then the interpreter, who was placed near the prisoners, told Mr. Sinclair he should convey to him the questions of the governor and translate his answers, and Mr. Sinclair bowing to express his acquiescence, the examination commenced.

The name, country, and occupation of the prisoner was the first question; to which he briefly replied, "Sinclair—Scotland—schoolmaster."

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The governor turned to ask some one near why he had been told the prisoners were all English; and Mr. Sinclair, vexed at this misunderstanding, would have explained the cause, but thought it advisable not to allow that he understood the remark made in Japanese. He was then asked why he left his country, and what led him to land in Japan?

He replied that his story was too long to repeat through an interpreter. He was on his way to India with the two boys, when they were wrecked on an unknown coast, where they landed hoping to meet with hospitality.

"Why was your first act one of aggression?" was asked him. "Why did you allow one of your people to commit murder?"

"The offender was the captain of the ship," answered Mr. Sinclair; "and he believed the soldiers were going to rob him. But we are not answerable for, neither do we wish to justify, the rash and culpable act of an angry man. We had known him but a short time; we saw the faults of his character; but we were in distress, and glad to accept a passage in his ship."

The governor ordered Mr. Sinclair to write out his whole story in the Dutch language, which he would have translated; and then proceeded to ask a number of questions about England, the ship, and the names and histories of his companions; and his brief answers seemed unsatisfactory, for the next questions were to Frank and Walter to ask their names. No answer was returned; and Mr. Sinclair told the interpreter that the boys were ignorant of the Dutch language. But, on the questions being put to Tom and Mike, they immediately answered by giving their names, which were sorely travestied by the interpreter.

When asked their country, Tom answered England; but Mike, with his usual national pride, said Ireland, again puzzling the governor, who demanded sharply where Ireland was?

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"It's all one," said Tom to the interpreter; "give yon boy a pencil, and he'll make it plain."

When the governor comprehended the demand of the sailor, he ordered pencil and paper to be given to Walter, and Tom begged him to "larn them dull dogs whereaways Ireland and Scotland lay, by England," and with a little explanation from Mr. Sinclair, the boy soon produced a very fair outline map of England; Scotland, and Ireland; and Mr. Sinclair showed the interpreter that these countries, being all united under the rule of the Queen of England, and speaking the same language, were often known as one.

The interpreter was intelligent enough to comprehend and explain to the governor that these countries, like Niphon, Kiousiou, and Sikok, were known by the name of the principal island; but still the great man seemed suspicious, and muttered, "They are not true." He examined the contents of their various pockets; and taking up a book, asked what it was? Mr. Sinclair replied, "The Prayer-book of the Church of England;" on which he dropped it with dismay, saying with horror, "Christian!" and ordered it to be restored to its owner.

The money and some trifling articles were examined and returned, except Mr. Sinclair's knife, which was retained. The multifarious collection belonging to the boys and the sailors required closer investigation, and excited much curiosity; a fishing-book, a pocket-telescope, a little book on the laws of cricket, a crushed and half worn-out number of *Punch*, a pocket-book for the preceding year, in which Walter had pencilled some unintelligible memorandums, and which also contained his sovereigns, and a letter or two, which were speedily put aside to be subjected to a judicial inquiry, lest the contents should be plots or treasons —these were the treasures laid before the dignified assembly, with the addition of the short pipes and empty tobacco-boxes of the sailors. After much serious

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discussion, all the property was restored to the owners, except the pocket-book and letters, which they were informed must be sent to Jeddo—a decision which made Frank laugh, but greatly discomposed poor Walter.

The judge was proceeding to sum up, when a messenger arrived with the ropes which had bound Mackay's arms, and which the official, one of the police, showed had been partly cut through, an operation which the prisoner could not have effected himself, and afterwards torn asunder. Great agitation pervaded the council; the governor said to Mr. Sinclair, "Who cut this rope?" He could only reply decidedly that he knew nothing of it.

"It is not the truth," said the governor, angrily. "Some of your party must have cut it; and you only had a knife. Reveal all you know; you talked with him last night. How, and where has he escaped?"

Mr. Sinclair again asserted his innocence, and said, "he only talked to the man to prepare him for the death which he believed inevitable."

"You are not believed," said the governor, "you must be subjected to a close and solitary confinement, with other punishments, until you confess your guilt."

When the interpreter repeated his threat, Mike could keep silence no longer; he cried out, in his rude attempt at Dutch, "Stop there, the master knows nothing of it! It was I who cut the rope as we came along the road."

Great surprise was produced by Mike's frank avowal of the offence; and, after more discussion, it was ordered that the prisoners should remain in confinement till a report was forwarded to Jeddo, and judgment pronounced. In the mean time, quite uneasy at the neglect shown to her, Miss Griffin, in tolerable Dutch, addressed the court, saying—

"Surely, gentlemen, it is not your intention to detain, in yonder dismal prison, the daughter of the noble

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Colonel Gayton. Remember, it will be looked on as a national affront; and not only will the Honourable East India Company send out a fleet to avenge such an insult, but the powerful Queen of England will also take means to make the rulers of this country feel her displeasure. It were well for you to be wary in your proceedings."

It was astonishing to see the effect which Miss Griffin's thundering denunciation produced. It was immediately announced to the lady that she and her charge should be removed to a suitable dwelling, and have proper attendance, till the will of the Emperor was known on their case; they should certainly not return to the common prison. Miss Griffin held up her head triumphantly; but when she communicated the decision to Minna, the affectionate child burst into tears, and, running up to Walter, threw her arms round him, and clasping Mr. Sinclair's hand, cried, "Oh! do not let them take me away from you! I shall never see you again!"

This scene required no interpretation, and even the stern governor seemed moved; and, when Mr. Sinclair petitioned that the ladies might be allowed to visit them in the prison, he granted them permission to have an interview of an hour twice a week, with which they were satisfied; and, after a sorrowful farewell, Miss Griffin and her pupil were led out, to be conveyed to their new abode, and the prisoners were asked if they had any request to make before they returned to their dismal captivity.

Mr. Sinclair requested writing materials and changes of linen for the whole party, which, he was assured, should be supplied; and they were led back again to their cages, which had, they found, been carefully cleaned, new mats and quilted coverlets placed in them, as well as benches covered with cloth, and long, loose cotton robes, which were, the guards told them, for sleeping-gowns; but all these preparations were

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depressing, for they were indications of a long term of imprisonment.

After their dinner, they were joined by Madsimano, who had obtained leave to visit them, under the pretext of acquiring the English language. He was in low spirits. The unhappy guards who had suffered Mackay to escape were in confinement, and would probably be put to death; and he, himself, had fallen under suspicion.

"When I hear you speak of the privileges and free institutions of your prosperous and enlightened country," said Madsimano, "I become dissatisfied. A system must have a false foundation which requires such restrictions, such *espionage*, to prop it. Even now these guards are noting my gestures, my tones, and the number of words I utter in a language which is happily unknown to them. And all these I must explain to the inquisitors to-morrow. What can be the natural result of such vexatious scrutiny but equivocation or falsehood?"

"That should not be, my son," answered Mr. Sinclair; "no expediency can palliate deceit. I pray you to speak only such words as might be repeated to your rulers."

Madsimano laughed scornfully as he replied, "You little know the frivolous, petty explanations demanded by these men in office,—the tyrannical slaves of a despotism. We are not, my friend, by nature, a cruel people; but our laws are arbitrary and oppressive. We need what you term a free constitution."

"And a Christian Church," added Mr. Sinclair. "But that blessing will not long be withheld from you: the soil is ready for the reception of the seed; and most assuredly God will soon send the sower. And now, my son, even from the little book so disdainfully cast away by your undiscerning governor, I will repeat to you some of the beautiful prayers, in which we beseech the mercy of God for the mighty and the lowly, the Christian and the Heathen."

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Madsimano had previously been moved and delighted with the prayers of the Liturgy, and was earnestly desirous to learn English, that he might more readily unite in devotion and conversation with his friends. Mr. Sinclair soon taught him to repeat the sublime prayer of our Lord in English, and they spent some hours in study, and in pleasant discourse. He assured them that Miss Griffin and Minna were well cared for; they had been placed with a lady of rank, who had herself accomplished young daughters; and whose son had been much among the Dutch, and had acquired not only their language, but French also: thus they would be able to converse with ease.

In the evening the prisoners were supplied with a good stock of cotton under-garments. The shape was certainly peculiar and puzzling, and afforded them much amusement. But the next day their own were taken away to be washed, and when they were returned, some days after, a quantity of new clothes accompanied them, made exactly after the patterns. They were also presented with silk and cotton outer robes, which, in the summer weather, and in the close prison, were certainly much pleasanter than their own worn and dusty cloth dresses. They were daily visited by their friend Madsimano, who made rapid progress in English, and in his knowledge and approval of the Christian faith; but he continued very anxious, for he saw that he was himself suspected, and he feared that the release of his friends was hopeless.

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CHAPTER XXX.

Miss Griffin and Minna *à la Japonnaise*—Madsimano's Danger—Plans of Escape—The Hari-kari—Excursions in the Country—A Convenient Physician—A Ride into the Woods—The Captured Guards.

It was a week before the prisoners had a visit from Miss Griffin and Minna, who then appeared dressed *à la Japonnaise*. They wore several robes, one over the other. The outer robe was of pale-green silk, bordered with white embroidery, and fastened round the waist by a long green silk scarf, tied behind, as Minna gravely pointed out, to show that they were unmarried ladies; the married dames being distinguished by blackened teeth and a sash tied before. The sleeves of these dresses were immensely wide, and so long, that Minna's sleeves touched the ground. Pretty, but very inconvenient plaited straw sandals, splendid flowers in their hair, and large painted fans in their hands, completed their masquerade dress. Miss Griffin wore her new robes with becoming dignity, defying criticism; but Minna strutted before the barred cages of her friends, tossing her pretty head, and waving her large fan, with a mockery of the fine lady that made them all laugh.

"It's a great sight to set eyes on, mavourneen," said Mike; "and sure, wasn't it the very moral of the ould lady I was seeing myself at Donnybrook fair, and she sated, with a painted face, on a high stool, browbating the boys on the matther of the penny she was to get for seeing the inside of the show. And wasn't there a purty cratur, all as one as Miss herself, dancing a jig outside to 'tice the boys to put down the odd penny,

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barrin' it wasn't the poteen as had been and taken it, for the ould miss in the green gownd to pass them to see the sights."

Minna laughed as she said, "Mike thinks our dress too fine, Papa Sinclair; but if you did but see Madam Kooda, with whom we live!—she wears six silk dresses at the same time; the outer dress is black, the next scarlet, then green, then white, then blue, then yellow, and, beneath all, cotton garments. How she walks—or rather slides—about in them, I cannot tell. Then she has such masses of hair rolled on her head, something like the fashion of English ladies, but stuck full of tortoise-shell rods, or arrows, as long as my arm. It is altogether a very uncomfortable dress; for how could I ever run about on the grass, or climb trees, with all these things on?"

"But are the people kind to you, Minna?" asked Walter.

"Delightful," answered she. "Madame Kooda is very charming and clever. She calls me her little daughter. But her girls know much more than I do; they draw, and make flowers and fans and boxes. They have read a great deal more than I have, and are quite learned; Miss Griffin and they have such lectures and conversations. Then they sing charmingly, and play on the guitar, which I am learning; and we have such pleasant parties sailing on the river. Oh, Frank, how you would like *Kooda Sama*, the eldest son. They have no father. He is only sixteen, but he is quite a grave man; rides out with a train of attendants, and attends councils. He reads a great deal, knows Dutch and French, and we are teaching him English. He has lent me some pretty French books, 'The Travels of Rolando,' and some delicious 'Fairy Tales,' and here, Walter, I have brought the 'History of Russia' for you."

"The system of education in Japan is radically defective," said Miss Griffin; "of universal history

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they are quite ignorant; of the sciences, their knowledge is miserably scanty. I am now engaged in composing a treatise on education, in the French language, which, should we be detained till I complete it, I shall lay before the head of the educational department, I trust, with beneficial results."

Mr. Sinclair earnestly hoped that the release of the gifted authoress might take place before she had time to commit herself by laying her plans of reform before a despotic government.

"Oh, but I forgot to tell you, Papa Sinclair," said Minna, "what Kooda has whispered to me:—that a Dutch ship will sail from Nagasaki in two months for India, and the captain is to be intrusted with the care of Miss Griffin and me. I said I must have you all with me, but Kooda shook his head, and told me you might be detained for years, unless Mackay was caught and punished. And, only think, he said dear Captain Madsimano was suspected and watched, and perhaps, in another week or two, orders might come from Jeddo to arrest him. Kooda is very kind-hearted, and I do think he told me this that I might repeat it to you."

All were grieved that their much-loved friend Madsimano should be in danger for his kindness towards them; and Minna was requested to obtain all the information she could from her young friends, that they might warn him of the conspiracy against him.

Besides the books, the visitors had brought fruit, confections, and wine, which the worthy Madame Kooda thought would be proper for Mr. Sinclair; and Minna left her friends richer in comforts, but mor depressed in spirits than ever.

Mr. Sinclair wrote out every necessary particular of the history of himself and of the two boys, and transmitted the paper to the governor; and a few days after they were again brought before him, and again

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tormented with frivolous questions. Then Mr. Sinclair was closely examined about his religious opinions and vocation, for they persisted in regarding him as a *bonze*, or priest, and he was strictly forbidden to speak to his guards on the subject of religion. No prohibition was named about Madsimano, who was, Mr. Sinclair concluded, of too high rank to be directed by a provincial judge. Mike was again cross-examined with severity about his assistance in the escape of Mackay, who was not yet recaptured, they now learnt.

Mr. Sinclair then demanded when they might hope to be released. The confinement was producing a distressing effect on the health of all; and the father of the younger boy would especially be exasperated and distracted by the detention of his son.

"I have no power to release you," answered the governor. "Your offences have doomed you to imprisonment; but your health shall certainly be cared for. A physician shall be sent to you, and if he pronounces it necessary, you shall, under restrictions, have air and exercise."

This was, at least a change for the better, and they returned with rather more cheerfulness. An intelligent physician, who spoke Dutch and French, visited them, and when he had heard their story, seemed to feel much compassion for their misfortunes. He gave them no hopes of release, but promised to obtain for them air, exercise, and every comfort but liberty.

They were immediately supplied with better food, vegetables, fowls, partridges, all stewed in rich sauces, and in small pieces, that they might be easily carried to the mouth with the chop-sticks, rice in various savoury and sweet forms, strawberries, cherries, and apricots, but no butcher's meat, nor milk, which it is thought unjust to take from the cow, which needs it to feed her young ones. All these preparations were served in elegant little *papier-mâché* bowls, painted and highly lacquered.

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This improved diet was duly valued, but still higher did they value the order which Madsimano told them was issued, that they should have daily exercise on foot or on horseback, as they chose; attended, of course, by a proper guard.

"I cannot accompany you my friends," said he. "My position becomes daily more precarious. To-morrow I may be plunged into some secret prison, or banished to one of our dreadful penal isles, beyond comfort or hope. It is yet possible, though the attempt be perilous, that you may succeed in escaping. I must remain and suffer. I have no haven to which I can fly."

"Let us all go together, dear Madsimano," said Frank. "I am a poor fellow, without any family-home to receive me; but in a free country like England any man with a bold spirit and a stout frame may make himself a home."

"And then my papa will be a father to both Frank and you," said Walter. "He is rich, and powerful, and kind: his house will be your home, because you have been my friends. Do let us run away again, Frank; and won't it be a lark to carry off Madsimano to India? You must think out all the scheme, dear Madsimano, and take the command, and we will all be your soldiers. Depend on it, you'll find we can be plucky fellows, with home before us, and these prison-cages behind us."

"It would not be right to abandon my country," said Madsimano, with a sigh.

"Now stop there," said Frank; "it is your country that has abandoned you, when spies are placed round you, and imprisonment hanging over you, though you are innocent. When your country can be so sly and tyrannical towards you, I say you have a right to make off while you have a chance. Wally and I can put you up to some clever things about running away."

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"Thoughtless boys," said Mr. Sinclair. "Do not speak so lightly of a fault which has brought so much distress on yourselves and others. But for you, Madsimano, I am of opinion that you would be perfectly justified in leaving your country now, at any rate for a time, when you know that you have been judged and sentenced without trial or the opportunity of defending yourself. But alas, even if you were willing to share our fate, how can we hope to escape from this strictly-guarded island?"

Madsimano smiled, and said, "I am not yet without the power and influence belonging to my rank. I can certainly command the means of escape for myself. There will be more difficulty in getting you all off, and the adventure would require much previous consideration, contrivance, and arrangement. I am strangely tempted, for I believe that Christianity must be the true religion, and here I dare not profess my belief and cannot fulfil the duties it enjoins. I am a noble, and should thus escape the doom of perpetual imprisonment, but only by submitting to a practice, which I now regard with horror. I must at the command of the emperor, and to preserve my name untainted, and my property unconfiscated, publicly become my own executioner. The *Hari-kari*, or, as you would translate it, "Happy dispatch," is a ceremony which we of noble blood are taught to perform with dexterity, by cutting twice across the bowels, in the form of a cross, so effectually, that death immediately follows; and so strong is early prejudice, that I feel bowed with shame to think that I am flying from a fate which reason and conviction assure me is a crime, destructive of soul as well as body."

"We will pray, my son," said Mr. Sinclair, "that you may have clearer light; but, trust me, you, even if we fail, ought to leave the country; if you are prevented, bow your head to the executioner, rather than lift your hand against the life God has bestowed

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Think of yourself first; I fear we should but impede your flight."

"We will accomplish all," replied Madsimano. "These excursions will afford opportunities not to be neglected; but we must be cautious, and not precipitate. Every day you must make your guards conduct you some different road, as if for variety; at last we will fix on one suited to our purpose. And now, to deceive these watchful men, teach me some English words, and I will blunder in the pronunciation as much as possible; this may divert their suspicions."

Madsimano made his tutor repeat the same word several times, and was so long in pronouncing it correctly that the boys laughed heartily; and the guards, catching the joke, laughed with them, and even repeated "Good morning," "Good night," themselves with much pride.

The first day they were allowed to go out they had great enjoyment in walking through the busy streets; they were dressed in robes like those of the people, and each was attended by a guard, who wore a sabre and dagger at his side, but who was principally engaged in holding an umbrella over the head of his prisoner. The neat, clean houses, the pretty miniature gardens which surrounded them, with the tiny shrubberies and pools of water, in which were artificial islets, while toy-like boats were sailing upon them, amused the boys, reminding them of Chinese pictures. Beyond the town were the fields waving with maize, rice, beans, and peas, radishes and various vegetables; not an inch of ground was uncultivated, and plenty and prosperity seemed to reign over the land.

"And where will ye be thinking now, Mr. Frank," said Mike, "will they be kaping their poor folks? Sorra a cabin can we set our blessed eyes on; and the pratee-grounds and the grunters—sure there's niver a taste of a grunter nor a cow, barrin' they shut them up in their parlours; and niver a midden at all!"

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Mike might well be astonished at the order and cleanliness—dirt was not, disorder was not, beggars were not! What was it that could be wanting in this happy-looking country?

"What might not Christianity and freedom effect in this productive and pleasant country?" said Mr. Sinclair; "and what will be the sin of those men who must ultimately be chosen to bring these blessings hither, if they suffer disorder, drunkenness, and immorality to follow in their train?"

Their first excursion was not more than three or four miles; but they extended their walk daily. When they expressed the wish, they were supplied with horses, and then went ten or twelve miles into the country, or along the coast. The guards enjoyed these relaxations, and became easy and lenient, following, or even riding before their unarmed prisoners, and gradually diminishing their number, till at length four guards were deemed sufficient.

Miss Griffin and Minna constantly visited them, and brought them gloomy forebodings of their own continued captivity, and alarming reports of the emperor's anger against Madsimano, who was not only accused of conniving at the escape of Mackay, but of some secret practices against the government. It wanted but a month till the departure of the *William*, the Dutch merchant vessel, when, one day Miss Griffin and Minna arrived at the same time as Madsimano at the prison. The instant Minna saw her kind friend, she exclaimed, "Do, dear Captain Madsimano, sail away with us in the *William*, though Kooda says that cannot be: it will be too late. What does he mean? He says the imperial guards will be here to-morrow night with the emperor's *permission*. What is a permission—what have you done?"

"Nothing to deserve the hatred of man, or the emperor's *permission*," said he, "though much to offend God. Now listen to me, my dear ladies. Take this

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map, which your young friend Walter has drawn. Do you see this small island?—it is sixty miles from the coast of Japan, and is wholly uninhabited. When you leave the bay of Nagasaki, and are out at sea, you must show this map to Captain Sharp, such is, I believe, the name of the captain of the *William*, and tell him, he shall be well paid—I know this consideration will have weight with him—if he will sail near this group of islands, hanging out a white flag as he comes in sight of them, and when he sees a white flag answer his signal from the island, he must send a boat to shore. I tell you no more—you must ask me no more. You may be summoned again before the governor, and the less you know the better. Keep this communication secret, even from your kind hosts."

"But if you revealed your whole plan to me, Captain Madsimano," said Miss Griffin, "I might suggest some improvement to you."

"Doubtless you might, madam," answered he; "but I am a soldier in authority, accustomed to command and be obeyed without question. And now I take my leave; for it is not well that we should be seen together. Remember, no more words on the subject. *Au revoir!*"

Madsimano withdrew with a smile, leaving Miss Griffin disappointed that she had not had the management of the plan, yet too well aware of the importance of silence to discuss the matter further. Then Minna produced her usual little presents, and sung some pretty, simple Japanese airs, which pleased the guards much, and they were still more delighted when she addressed some Japanese words to them, and laughed as they corrected her pronunciation. She offered some fruit to the men, and told them, that when she came again she would ask Kooda Sama for some fine tobacco to bring for them. Miss Griffin gently reproved her for conversing with the soldiers; but Mr. Sinclair felt grateful to her for thus conciliating them.

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Before his departure Madsimano had put into the hands of Mr. Sinclair and Frank, two written copies of instructions, which they took the opportunity of reading while the guards were at dinner, and then to discuss and arrange among themselves the preliminaries necessary for the important attempt. Some days before Madsimano had secretly given to them, at different times, four long stout ropes, and these, Tom, Mike, and Frank wore concealed beneath their loose robes; while Mr. Sinclair and Walter were charged with some shorter pieces. Their friend had particularly recommended them to obtain all the sleep they could on this night, but with so many anxious thoughts on their minds, they did not find this a very easy task. They began their preparations very early in the morning, while the guards still slept, by putting on double suits of clothes, and arranging the ropes and their knives beneath them, in such a manner that they could readily make use of them. Then they waited with beating hearts till their guards woke up, and the trays were brought with their plentiful breakfast, of which they took care to eat heartily, as Madsimano had advised them. Mr. Sinclair could now converse a little with the guards, and he suggested to them, that as the morning was not too hot, they should make an excursion, which they had for some time proposed, to the mountain woods, which lay about twelve miles from the coast to the south-west of their prison; that they should take their dinner with them, and not return till the cool of the evening.

The soldiers were ready enough to accept this easy duty, and gave orders to have the dinner prepared and packed, and the horses made ready. In the mean time the good physician visited his patients and highly approved of their equestrian excursion, telling them, in an emphatic tone, that he should report that he had ordered it. His words and his penetrating

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glances made Mr. Sinclair suspect that he was in the confidence of Madsimano, especially when he talked long to Tom, who never was an invalid, and said to him, "Your master had better send out for a large flask of *saki* to treat the men, they will be pleased with it;" and at the same time he secretly gave him a phial, with such a significant smile, that Tom perfectly understood his meaning, and as soon as the physician departed he made the guards understand that his master ordered *saki;* and as nothing was ever withheld that the prisoners required, the man soon went out and returned with a large flask. Tom pointed out that this must be hid beneath the cloak of one of the men, who laughed and complied with his order.

The horses were brought out, and all rode off, the guards appearing quite happy and unsuspicious. They proceeded leisurely, and it was two hours before they penetrated and began to ascend the lonely mountain woods. Tom and Mike rode behind with the four guards, and now they made signs for the flask, of which each affected to take a deep draught, while Tom contrived to empty the phial into the flask, before he returned it to the soldiers; signifying to them that the rest was to be divided amongst them, which the four men tried to do, with scrupulous accuracy.

After riding up the wooded mountain path for half an hour, it was agreed that they should dismount and rest awhile, for the sun was hot, and the horses were tired. The poor animals were tied up, and guards and prisoners rested under a spreading fig-tree. Frank, who never wearied, climbed the tree, to throw down the ripe delicious fruit into the *sombreros* of the sailors, the large broad-brimmed hats, delicately woven of the outer rind of the bamboo, into a sort of light gauze, dyed black, with which their guards had supplied them. In the mean time, the guards had one after another, sunk into a profound sleep, and when the three active young men drew near them, they were not to

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be roused, even by the noose of rope thrown over their breasts, which bound their arms firmly to their sides. Another noose secured their hands, and they were then raised with difficulty from the ground in a state of stupor, and each man bound firmly to a tree by one of the long ropes they had brought. They were deprived of their daggers, sabres, black robes and helmets, in which their conquerors arrayed themselves, and they had scarcely accomplished this, when Madsimano rode up through another part of the wood to join them.

"Excellently done!" said he. "Now hang the baskets of food and the empty flask to one of the horses, for we must not delay another minute."

But seeing one of the captives was a little roused, he said to him: "See, this letter which I place at your side; it is addressed to the emperor himself, and will exculpate you from all blame. As soon as you are released, share this money which I place in your sleeve, with your companions; and do not say more than you can avoid of the escape of persecuted men, who thank you for your civility and fidelity."

"I will shut my eyes, Sama," answered the man. "The rest still sleep: may you get off, for you deserve to be happy."

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CHAPTER XXXI.

Madsimano's Plan—The Progress among the Mountains—The Mock Prisoners—Japanese Inn—The Benefit of Liberality—The Paper Mulberry—The Magpie—The sight of the Sea—The Faithful Massee—The Odd Hand.

THE next minute they were all mounted and speeding through the wood, free and armed men. It was difficult to realize the blessed change. They would not delay even to speak, but silently lifted up their thoughts in thankfulness to God. It was not till they had rode on for two hours that Madsimano said, "It matters not to change our position now, my friends, for these hills are perfect solitudes; but we must necessarily pass inhabited spots, in order to procure changes of horses. Then, remember, that you Mr. Sinclair, and poor Walter, are prisoners, whom I, and these three, in the character of Dutch soldiers, are conveying to Miako. That story will do at present; but if we succeed in drawing near the north-west coast, as I hope to do, we must if questioned, name another destination."

"Shall we ever be able to cross the island to the opposite coast?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"It is not more than fifty miles from hence," answered he, "to that part of the shore which I seek; by riding night and day, we must reach the sea to-morrow night; after that, I have arranged for the rest. Now we must have another hour's ride, and then rest and dine. By that time, we shall be thirty miles from your loathsome prison, and, as your flight cannot be discovered before evening, we may safely enjoy the rest of an hour or two."

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Madsimano had brought forage for the horses, which were tied up and fed; and their shoes, which are merely made of twisted straw tied on with cords, were renewed. Then the happy fugitives ate their own dinner of hard-boiled eggs and rice cakes, with abundance of figs and mulberries from the trees around, and Madsimano said,—"It is now two or three weeks since I foresaw this extremity of my fate; it cost me great pain to make up my mind to exile myself from my country, yet I had fewer ties to bind me to it than most men. I was an only child and an orphan, without relatives; I was a ward of the government, but my large estates gave me a high position. Had the emperor's permission for self-destruction been at once sent to me, the false sense of honour which I had been taught would have prompted me immediately to obey. But to be suspected, and secretly sentenced to imprisonment, or banished to an island of felons, was a degradation which my pride and my principles alike refused to submit to, when freedom of action and opinion, with the friendship of men I had become sincerely attached to, could be obtained. I therefore made my preparations. I ascertained the time when the Dutch merchantman was to sail, then I rode over to my estates in the west, where I frequently go to visit my people, and there I arranged with a faithful and attached servant, to bring a good boat, stored as I directed, to a certain spot I pointed out, and to be lying off the coast, in readiness for my signal, on the morning of the day after to-morrow; and there to remain as long as there was hope that he might be needed."

"And does the man know anything about boating?" asked Frank.

"Sufficient to bring the boat round the coast," answered Madsimano. "But once embarked, I must depend on our experienced sailors here, to carry us out to the remote island, which, some time ago, when

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sailing about for pleasure, I marked out with a prophetic feeling that it might prove a safe refuge in a season of misfortune. But let us sleep now, my friends, that we may devote the night to action."

After a refreshing rest of two hours, they started again, reinvigorated and full of hope, to cross the craggy heights of the mountains, where yawning precipices or rents of the rocks rendered every step dangerous, and compelled them to dismount, and lead the horses through the barren, rugged wilds, retarding their progress, till the darkness of night obliged them to seek a sheltered niche, and remain there till after midnight. Then the moon rose, and lighted their steps through the chaotic maze, and showed them a descent, which conducted them gradually to a series of cultivated hills, amongst which stood scattered cottages, or rather farm-houses, from whence the yelping of the watch-dogs warned the travellers to proceed with caution.

By the time that the morning light had brought out the men to their labour, the wearied horses could with difficulty be carried forward; and they were reluctantly compelled to enter upon the high-road, in order to seek one of the post-houses, which are placed at regular distances. This was a hazardous change, but gave them the advantage of excellent roads, and thus expedited their journey. For the first time, they met with travellers, usually in large parties, men carried by porters in *norimons*, or covered palanquins, with pack-horses led by slaves, laden with their baggage. Sometimes they encountered bands of pilgrims, itinerant priests, and juvenile dealers in small wares, sweetmeats, straw shoes for horses and men, and all the trifles likely to be useful to the passing traveller.

Though the military appearance of the fugitives, and their riding without servants to lead their horses, protected them from interruption, they were evidently

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regarded with curiosity; and Madsimano thought it prudent to take an opportunity to bind the arms of Mr. Sinclair and Walter loosely, and put the reins of their horses into the hands of Tom and Mike, while he and Frank followed with military precision. Thus the procession arrived at a small village, and in some anxiety rode up to a post-house, amidst a confusion of porters, travellers, and their norimons, pack-horses and their attendants, which startled the fugitives, astonished at coming so suddenly into the bustle of a thick population.

Madsimano, leaving the rest at a short distance, rode up to the post-master, and commanded six horses to be brought out without delay, for a special service. His uniform and his distinguished appearance enforced prompt obedience, and, with profound respect, six excellent horses, properly caparisoned and provided with new straw shoes, were led out, and the seven worn-out animals, the pack-horse being no longer needed, were taken to the stables. Crowds surrounded the prisoners, with looks of keen curiosity; but no direct inquiries were made; the post-master alone ventured to say,—"If the great Sama required more force to guard his prisoners, government messengers from Jeddo were in the house, waiting for despatches from Miako, who would be glad to be of assistance."

Madsimano replied that reinforcement was unnecessary, as the prisoners were only a feeble old man and a boy; and paying for the horses, he courteously took leave of the civil official, and moved with his party slowly along the high road till they were out of sight of the village. Then they diverged through unfrequented paths, and plains, and through woods, directly towards the coast. Once, during the day, they returned to the road to rest at a way-side inn, and obtain refreshment.

In this spacious, but low building, they found all

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they needed. A neat, clean, unfurnished apartment, divided from others only by the usual painted screens, with lattices open on a garden glowing and sweet with summer flowers. Clean mats, for resting upon, were spread, of the legal size, which is established, as Madsimano told his friends, by imperial edict—that is, according to English measure, seven feet four inches and a half in length, and half as much in breadth. When used to cover a room, these regulated mats are placed close to each other, but must not be woven of larger size.

The master of the inn soon served to each of the party, with his own hand, a cup of tea; and after a little time, dinner was spread in the pretty lacquered dishes and bowls, which all admired so much. They had broiled fish with slices of lemon, vegetable soup, and all sorts of vegetables in seasoned sauces, a sort of biscuit bread, sweetmeats, and then saki, and the eternal tea again. They thoroughly enjoyed the plentiful repast, and not the less so that Madsimano told them it was probably the last feast that would be served to them in Japan. He purchased some of the biscuit, which somewhat resembled macaroni or the *gressins* of Piedmont, paying for everything, including the forage for the horses, with liberality.

"You do not grudge me my due, Sama," said the man, "as the captain of a large troop did this morning. He was in pursuit of some escaped prisoners, and took the road towards Nagasaki." He spoke these words significantly. Madsimano made no reply, but a civil parting speech; after which they mounted and rode off, thankful for their escape, and for the indulgence purchased for them by the liberality of Madsimano, who observed that they had yet many risks to encounter, for the country would be scoured in every direction by the police.

They left the high road, but the country was covered with villages, from whence the people gathered about

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them, in compassion for the prisoners, and curiosity at the foreign faces of the soldiers; and it was impossible to hide from themselves that, as they went on, they were leaving behind them ample marks to track them out; and that if the boat was not ready to take them up, they must be inevitably recaptured.

"I will plunge into the sea and end my miserable life sooner than be made a prisoner," exclaimed Madsimano.

"Such are not the sentiments of a real Christian," said Mr. Sinclair. "His motto is 'Bear and forbear.' You are yet but a novice in religious experience, or you would know that man has no more right to take away his own life than that of another. His trials are sent to perfect his salvation; and the martyrs who suffered for the truth in this very island, are now reaping the rich reward of their brief sufferings on earth. To endure, is bravery; to flee from trial, is cowardice."

"Pray for me, my good father," replied Madsimano, "that I may receive strength to submit to the horrors of disgrace and captivity, at which my soul quails. But we may yet escape, though, alas! our horses are weary, and we are yet some miles from the sea coast."

They rested for half an hour to eat some bread, and renew the shoes of the horses. The boys looked round for some fruit, and Madsimano said, "Observe, Walter, the tree beneath which we are seated. It is one of the most valuable productions of our country, the *Urusi*, from which is extracted the varnish which is the peculiar boast of our manufactories. The glutinous milky sap, which, when drawn from the tree, is supposed to be a poison, is obtained by piercing the trunk; and from this is made the varnish which you see on every household article—tables, dishes, trays, cups, everything is finished by this brilliant glazing, in the manufacture of which I believe our country is unrivalled."

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"That is true," said Walter; "we call it 'Japanning;' but is the use of the varnish dangerous?"

"Certainly not," answered Madsimano; "for it is well known that hot water may be poured into a lacquered cup, and drank off, without your perceiving any flavour of the varnish, so skilful is the process of applying it."

"And that tree," said Walter, "is, I know, *Morus papyrifera*, the paper mulberry, from which this thin paper, which was given us for pocket-handkerchiefs, is made."

"It is so," said Madsimano, "and the consumption of paper is, with us, something beyond computation, for curtains, tapestry, lanterns, fans, table-covers, handkerchiefs, cloaks, and packing, besides its legitimate use for writing and printing, and the immense quantity used in the manufacture of *papier mâché*, as you call it, of every useful article for the table. But we have talked and rested long enough; let us go forward. What are you watching so attentively, my dear boy?"

"It is a magpie," answered he; "our own saucy, pert English magpie. Do look at him, Frank; it will remind you of home. He is scanning us with his cunning eye, as if he knew we were his countrymen; for depend on it, he is an exile. I should like to find out whether he thinks it necessary here to build the snug-roofed nest, with the outwork of thorns, safe from every one but bold school-boys."

"It is the Kasasi," said Madsimano, "a bird by no means admired with us; but we must not waste time in searching for its nest; for we must make the most of this last hour of daylight."

They ascended a succession of low hills, and when they had reached the summit of the last, Tom and Mike could not forbear uttering an exclamation which would have been a cheer, if Mr. Sinclair had not repressed it.

"Ay! ay!" said Tom, "I beg pardon, sir; but it came natural to hail when I set eyes again on the finest

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sight in the world—and that's the sea. Mike, my man," and the two sailors shook hands, "art thou fit for a splash in the tar-bucket, and a run up the shrouds again?"

"Arrah, thin, blessed be the light of this same day," said Mike; "barrin' it's nigh dark just now. And isn't it yourself, Mr. Mate, will be taking up yer honours agin; and won't I be cook, and cabin-boy, and ivry thing ye nade; and be sending the genthry up illigant jints of beef, and rale bread fit for Christians, and grog galore. And sure won't there be the nate berths? Och! ould Ireland for iver! Would you be seeing a Christian put up in a bird-cage there, my jewels? and him innocent as a sucking-pig, worra! the haythens!"

But still between them and the shore lay broken precipitous cliffs, over which it was hopeless to attempt to proceed on horses. Madsimano dismounted, left his horse tied up, and descended through the mazy, scattered rocks, which extended for a hundred yards from the sea. He looked anxiously round as he went on: all was silence and solitude; and in deep dismay he believed that his project must have failed—his attached servant had been betrayed—the boat had been seized! He groaned loudly as he paced along the narrow strand, distracted with the thought of the ruin he had brought on his unfortunate companions, as well as on himself. Suddenly he was arrested by the sound of a long low whistle, which fell into the air of a popular Japanese melody. It was the signal! He could scarcely command his lips to reply in the same melody; which he had no sooner done, than a little boat shot round a jutting crag, and pulled up to him.

"My faithful Massee! Is it indeed thou?" he exclaimed.

The boatman stepped on shore to bow his forehead to the earth before his beloved master. "Sama," he said, "I have waited six hours; I have thrown out my nets for fish; I have watched fearfully the distant

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sail ; I have trembled to hear the falling pebbles ; I have believed you were taken, and vowed to live only one day, and then die with you."

"And I am here to thank and reward you, and to send you back to the village a rich man," replied Madsimano.

"Alas, no, Sama, that may not be," answered he. "The keen eyes of the wicked will be upon me ; they will ask, where is thy large boat? Shall I tell them my master has sailed in it to yonder isle to hide himself : would not the babbling women talk of my secret voyage till it became known? Can I say to them, I must not speak of my boat, I will not answer you. Then I should be pointed at, and suspected, and at last I should die for you. No, Sama, I would go also with you ;" and the faithful servant unconsciously repeated the beautiful sentiment of the Moabite woman to her mother-in-law, "Whether thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people ; and thy God, my God."

"Have you also no relatives to demand your care, my poor Massee?" said his master.

"None ! none ! Sama," answered the man, "I love no one but you. If I remain here I must die for you, and I have thought I would take my boat out to deep water and swamp it."

"That you shall not do, Massee," said Madsimano ; "but where is the larger boat for us?"

"Behind the rock," replied he. "I have towed it from the village with toil. I wished to have rowed it, and brought no other boat ; but I should not then have obeyed you. It is best that it should lie hidden in the creek till the moon rise, then you can sail."

"And you also, Massee," said his master. "Watch a little longer, and when we see the moon I and my friends will join you."

The man prostrated himself to express his gratitude, and Madsimano returned with the good tidings,

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observing also that it would be necessary to carry off his humble dependant, to save him from punishment and themselves from detection.

"Ay, ay," said Tom, when he heard of the arrangement, "it's all fair; and an odd hand always comes in useful. And we can tow out his cockle-shell into deep water and scuttle it: then nobody will be no wiser."

Tom's plan was fully approved, and when all that they cared to take away was transferred to the boat, the horses were turned loose, as a further precaution, and they immediately set out, in the usual regular single file, to trot back to the place from whence they came.

Then the grateful travellers sought out a quiet little hollow in the cliffs, where, after their evening devotions, and special prayers for a blessing on their voyage, they rested till the broad moonbeams silvered the waves, and then embarked with joyful hearts.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Adieu to Japan—The Rocky Patmos—The Cargo of the Boat—The Encampment—The Island Lake—The Corean Islanders—Dangerous Bird-nesting—A Fishing Frolic—The results of a "Lark"—The Enemy in View.

THE two seamen, Frank, and the poor fisherman, took up the oars, and Madsimano, who alone knew the situation of the islands to which they were bound, undertook to steer. Massee's boat was towed a mile out and scuttled. Then Tom began to look round on their own large commodious boat with a critical eye.

"Isn't it a handsome boat, Tom?" said Walter. "See, these lockers are filled with provisions; here is a

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cask of fresh water, and the cooking-stove. Tom, we might sail in this boat to China."

"I'd not like to try her that far, Master Walter," answered he. "I'll not say she's short of provision, and cabin-fittings and such like; but throw your eyes on her build, sharp stem and broad stern, little better nor yon savage canoes; and what need to cumber her with this half-roof? Give me a bit of good timber, and a few tools, and I'll turn you out a tighter boat nor this lubberly craft in a week or two. How our captain steers with yon clumsy rudder amazes me."

But their anxious helmsman steered his native boat skilfully, and they made some miles direct from the shore without intermission of toil, or any alarm. Then they spread the sails, and a favourable wind soon carried them beyond the sight of land, tranquillizing their minds, as well as sparing their arms. By daylight they were in the open sea, passing, now and then, a small island, and sometimes seeing a distant sail which created no anxiety, till they were startled by the sight of a vessel, which appeared to have remarked their sail, and to be making up to them.

"It is one of the large watch-boats from Nagasaki," said Madsimano. "We are lost if it come up to us, we must show our colours, Massee."

Then Massee produced from a locker, two small square banners, striped black and white, which were displayed; and these flags, Madsimano told his friends, denoted official employment. They watched the effect with anxiety, and soon saw with great delight, the junk turn away, and make to shore.

"God be praised," said Madsimano. "Another hour will carry us to a sufficiently safe distance, and if the wind hold, we shall be in haven before night. Now we may venture to think of some breakfast."

Massee had caught some fine fish the previous night, and the stove being heated with charcoal, the kettle was boiled, the tea prepared, and the fish broiled. All

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declared the breakfast delicious, and felt ready for any amount of labour.

"It will probably be three weeks yet before the *William* sail," said Madsimano, "during which time we must be detained on the island, and watch carefully for the signal which, I doubt not, will be made. I have a friend among the Dutch traders who will arrange all with the captain of the vessel; and if he be one of the same nation, I have no fear; for the grand temptation to that money-loving people will not be wanting. I have promised ample remuneration, for though I have left my lands behind me, I have not come away a poor man."

The voyage was not tedious to the light-hearted sailors, for after trying in vain to converse by signs with Massee, they finally commenced with the help of the few Japanese words they had acquired to teach him English, an undertaking that afforded amusement to the whole party.

At last they came in sight of an archipelago of small islands, and Madsimano became much agitated. "Few of these islands are inhabited," he said, "and we have nothing to fear if we avoid them. Our haven is remote from them, and is too sterile to attract visitors. See," he added soon after, "yon white rock is the barren spot which will receive us, and which I trust will become, like the Patmos of my favourite Saint John, blessed by the presence of God."

Madsimano had long before this procured from the Dutch a copy of the New Testament in the Japanese language, and had read it with delight. His especial admiration of the mild and loving doctrine of the gentle St. John, was not to be wondered at in a country where meekness and peace are the striking characteristics of the people, even in their unconverted state.

The boat pulled up to the rocky Patmos, which appeared to all but Madsimano to be inaccessible. He

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had, in his very youthful days, explored every isle in this narrow sea, and noted this secure retreat for the scene of a romance which his imagination had created, and this he remembered in the hour of need. The breakers dashed against the rocky heights on every side, except on one spot where the receding tide left a narrow hem of strand, where mangroves clustered over with shell-fish, spread their roots into the sea, defying the opposing waves.

From the base to the summit of the rocks was a matted mass of bushes, rising perpendicularly; but on this, the west side, the inclination of the cliffs rendered an ascent possible, though difficult, from the entanglement of the wood. Madsimano had, however, overcome this difficulty, some years before for amusement; it was therefore certain it might be accomplished now, in necessity. They landed, therefore, on the narrow beach, and for the present, moored the boat beneath the roots of a mangrove. Then armed with two axes, which Madsimano had thoughtfully provided, they set out to explore their retreat. With great toil and struggling, they made their way to the heights of the tiny islet, which they found to be but the rough and craggy summit of a volcanic island, barely covered with grass and a few trees, the seeds of which had probably been scattered by the birds, which seemed now to have taken possession of it, and by their noisy angry cries intent on defying and chasing the intruders.

"Do not mind them," said Madsimano, laughing; "I have a musket, and could drive them away, but it would be unjust. We are certainly the usurpers of their empire; but we need not be their enemies. There's room for them as well as us."

"Ah, Mr. Sinclair," said Walter; "do you remember the Alp hunter, 'There's room upon the earth for all?' How glad I am that the Japanese are humane, and not savage, like the Malagasy pirates.

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They will surely become Christians when they are sought out, and taught."

"God send the day to come, my boy," answered Mr. Sinclair.

"Now," said Madsimano, "let the most observing and ingenious select a site, and construct a temporary dwelling for us till the *William* shall seek us out."

"I should say, in the midst of the island, where we can have most sport among the birds round us," said Frank.

"The highest point is the place," said Tom, "where we can keep a reg'lar watch for the *William*. This bit of a rock isn't what one may call *A* 1, and the sooner we can cut away our moorings the better. I should say, if we don't leave port soon, we shall find ourselves on short allowance."

But when Tom assisted Massee to unlade and bring up the stores of the boat, he was satisfied they were in no danger of famine. There were bags of rice, cases of tea, piles of dried fish, and jars of pickles. There were cooking utensils, cups, plates, and flasks, the cooking-stove, and a pile of clean mats. Madsimano had shown them a spring of fresh water, and all allowed that they had the means of living here for some time in perfect comfort. The spot they selected for a dwelling was a narrow crevice between two rocks, not more than six yards apart, with abrupt walls on each side, and a tolerably level rocky floor. This opening was directly over the sea, and was about six feet below the rugged table-land of the island, and some pine-trees, which had grown on the rocks, had been torn up by the winds, and had fallen across the crevice, formed a rude roof, which was sufficient shelter at this season.

A little labour rendered the descent to it smooth, and the active men soon cleared it by casting all the loose stones and dead leaves over the precipice into the sea, cleansed the floor, spread the mats, and

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arranged the stores in a convenient niche, and the cooking-stove at a proper distance. Then Mike said, —

"Sure now, isn't this same as nate a cabin as any sowl could wish, and sorra a sthroke of throuble to spake on at all, with an illigant view of the say quite convanient; and now will I be getting ye supper?"

Supper was desirable, and Mike soon prepared the smoking bowl of rice and dried fish, and the refreshing tea, which had been so long their regular fare; and the charm of liberty cheered their slumbers on this their first night of security. There was certainly not much to charm the eye in the wild and barren isle which had received them, but the novelty and freedom of their situation reconciled them to its dreariness, and Frank and Walter said, if they could find no other living creatures, they might certainly have some sport among the sea-birds, and even, as they had the boat, they might go out on some fishing excursions, to procure a little variety of food.

"That cannot be done consistent with safety," said Madsimano. "Though not many islands of the Archipelago are inhabited, it is near us that these chiefly lie. This has escaped, probably from its barren appearance and difficulty of access. The islanders are a jealous people, and, though nominally subject to Japan, are somewhat lawless. If a strange boat were seen on their seas, it would be certainly run down, and the occupiers probably murdered. I would even advise that, if the boat cannot be well hidden, we should destroy it."

There was a universal cry against the destruction of the boat, and even Mr. Sinclair shrank from the idea of another imprisonment, for, in any emergency, so long as they retained the boat, there was hope of escape; and, as to Tom and Mike, they declared that they would rather haul it up the cliffs than lose it. Therefore they and Massee descended to the shore, in order to row round the island to seek for the most

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secure place to conceal it, and were lucky enough to discover, beneath the roots of a mangrove, a dark cave running under the cliffs, the walls of which were covered with the nests of the esculent swallow, and which was overflowed by the sea at high water. Into this cave they ran the boat, moored it, and rejoiced to think it could not possibly be discovered.

But having accomplished this important duty, it was with extraordinary difficulty that even the experienced sailors climbed the cliffs from the spot, disturbing, as they struggled through the bushes, flocks of cormorants, gulls, and rose-coloured pelicans, which rose with such discordant cries, that a weak head might have well been driven distracted with the noise, and Massee required great assistance from his friends to drag him through the obstacles, and place his feet safely on a part of the island which appeared rather more fertile than that near their own encampment. There was a small lake surrounded by bamboos, and beautified with the floating water-lily; and beneath some tall trees, which resembled the walnut and chestnut, grew parterres of lovely flowers, the majestic lily, the brilliant gardenia, the fragrant stock, and the pink and white azalea. The lake too had its bright inhabitants; silver and gold fish were darting about in the waters, waterfowl were sailing about or skimming over them, while some cranes of great beauty were resting quietly on one leg at the side; monkeys and parrots were seen and heard in the trees, and small wild animals, resembling the hare and the fox, were scampering over the ground. Compared with the south of the island, where they had landed, this was a little paradise.

"Will we fetch them all over here, Tom," said Mike, "and then ask lave to make a nate cabin to hould them? God's blessin' on 'em all, and Captain Madsimano and Massee here himself, and nade enough sure he has of the blessin' of an honest boy, seeing he's no

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Christian; more's the pity; and how could he be helpin' that same, niver havin' heared of it; how could he, musha, if we didn't come to larn him?"

"I'd as lief wait orders, Mike," answered Tom. "The captain he orders as how we're to lay up yonder in port, and it's not our business to advise him to set out on a cruise, more by, we're not like to sight the *William* hereaway. So come on, my boys. I wish we'd had a gun, for yon ducks will be hard to catch in a starn chase."

But after cutting themselves some stout staffs, they set out on a chase after the unsuspecting wild fowl, and succeeded in knocking down some ducks. They then hunted and killed a fine hare, and would gladly have added a pannier of fish to their spoil, but were unprovided with the means of capturing them. But they returned in triumph to make a favourable report of their unpromising domain, and to cook a dinner of stewed hare and rice, which was some approach to the diet which the strong sailors pined for.

"But does not this report of the produce of the island," said Mr. Sinclair, "alarm you, my good friend? These advantages can never have been overlooked by the poor islanders, and we may dread an invasion."

"They would certainly deal harshly with us if they found us here," answered Madsimano; "for these islanders are more subtle and cruel than even the Chinese; and with less civilization than the Japanese, have also less generosity and charity. But I have no fear of a visit; they have not the fearless and active habits of your seamen, and would never attempt to scale these formidable cliffs for the prospect of an uncertain advantage. I confess that I do not wish to have any intercourse with them; for though we profess to consider them subject to Japan, all the Corean people are in fact our natural enemies, and for ages the wars carried on with them have been bloody and savage, repugnant to the peaceful character of our

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nation, and injurious to our prosperity. Many of the islanders are pirates, many, abandoned ruffians, the banished felons of other countries ; and necessity alone induced me to select such a neighbourhood for a brief residence."

"After this, my dear young men," said Mr. Sinclair, "I trust you will be careful that you are not seen by any passing boat. You have ample space for recreation here, and abundant food ; be contented to remain in this secure seclusion till we shall be happily released from our pleasant prison."

"But surely, sir," said Frank, "we may hunt and fish and wander freely about the island, which I am sure is uninhabited ?"

"Certainly," answered Madsimano. "The only danger is your being observed from the sea, which you must strictly guard against. If we fell into the hands of these islanders, our fate would be much more cruel than that we have escaped from."

A watch was constantly kept for the *William*, and to mark the course of the numerous junks and fishing-boats which passed ; but none seemed inclined to touch at the barren rock ; and thus the first ten days wore away rather monotonously, and very anxiously. The English learnt a little more Japanese, and Massee began to speak a few English words, and thus recover the use of his tongue. But new troubles fell upon them : millions of white ants invaded their stores. The destruction of the rice was almost complete ; the jars of pickle were emptied ; nothing escaped the voracity of the insects but the tin cases of tea. It was in vain to wage war against such untold myriads ; and they were compelled to forage for their daily food, thankful that the island and the season were favourable to them.

Fish from the lake were easily obtained, and fowls after a little trouble ; for, fearful of using a gun, the report of which would have been heard at a great

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distance, they had to make bows and arrows of the bamboo, and could soon bring down the birds, till the timid creatures took alarm, and almost wholly deserted the lake. Then the bold and skilful seamen, hanging over the rocks, suspended by some slight twig, ransacked the nests with success, bringing up young birds and eggs.

But one day they had a fright; for some fishermen, out at sea in their boats, had descried the marauders, screamed, jabbered, and not having firearms, flung spears at the strangers; but fortunately these did not reach them. The men, in alarm, hid themselves in a little cave in the face of the cliff, from which they could, unperceived, look down on the boats, and even hear the words of the shrill-voiced fishermen, who, they understood, took them for gigantic baboons, or chimpanzees, and proposed to return with guns to shoot these strange and dangerous creatures.

When the boat was out of sight, the men climbed to the heights to tell their adventure, and Frank laughed and exclaimed, "What jolly fun to be taken for baboons! We will sew the hare-skins together and make ourselves suits, that we may look like regular oran-outangs."

"And won't we be shot all the same, my jewels," said Mike, "in our hairy skins? Would'nt we betther be kaping out of their sight altogether?"

"Yes, Frank," said Walter, "Mike is right; it wouldn't be fair to risk life for a lark, so we'll make these birds do; and then here's my fish."

"But the lake fish is so slimy, Wally," answered Frank; "it tastes like ditch water. Let us have a trial in the sea; all's safe now."

"Ay, ay, Mr. Frank; the sea it is," answered Tom. "I count you like a sort of first lieutenant, and I'm not he as ever disobeys orders. Not that I'm that clear as how the captain gave out leave; but, fair or foul, I sail with you, my boy."

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With their rods and tackle, and panniers made by themselves of reeds, the whole party descended the cliffs to the narrow strand, Massee looking fearfully round, however, as if he suspected danger; but the sea showed no boat, and all seemed so tranquil that Massee, Frank, and Walter began their fishing, while Tom and Mike collected a quantity of lobsters, crabs, and oysters, with which the coast swarmed. In a short time all the panniers were filled, principally by the skill of Massee, whose tackle was better fitted for the capture of the larger fish than the slender lines and hooks of Walter's school fishing-book. Amongst the spoil the boys joyfully recognized cod, turbot, and the delicate soles; and heavily laden, as they now were, they prepared to ascend the cliffs in good spirits.

But on casting a last look over the sea, before they left, they saw, with consternation, a fishing-boat within a quarter of a mile of them, in which were two men standing and watching their proceedings with great curiosity. Vexed to be detected, their only resource was an immediate retreat, and they exerted themselves to scale the cliffs before the fishermen should approach near enough to discover that they were strangers. As soon as the men perceived their intention, they drew towards the shore, and encumbered as they were with fish, it was a most arduous task for the inexperienced part of the climbers to ascend the wall-like rocks. Tom was compelled to drag on Massee, who was quite unused to such feats; and before Mike could get up to assist Walter, the exhausted boy had dropped the pannier of shell-fish, which there was no time to recover, and they were compelled to leave this token of their industrious habits to excite still more the curiosity of the islanders.

They were much exhausted when they reached the plains, and Walter could not forbear shedding tears. "Oh, Tom," said he, "I'm sure we've done wrong, and Mr. Sinclair and Madsimano will both think that

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we are unworthy of trust. We have lost our shellfish, and exposed everybody to danger. Now, perhaps, a fleet will land to make us prisoners, or to kill us. Let us go home and tell the truth."

Unpleasant as the confession was, they nevertheless did tell the whole truth, and greatly Mr. Sinclair was distressed, for he had relied entirely on the obedience of his pupils; and Madsimano was much annoyed that their retreat was thus made known, as it might expose them to manifold dangers. Frank was so truly penitent that he was soon pardoned; but the probable results of his "lark" were still to be dreaded and guarded against.

"These Corean islanders," said Madsimano, "cannot climb like mountaineers; but they may assemble in multitudes, besiege us and cut off our escape. Above all they may communicate the fact of our being on this island to our governors, who will, under any difficulties, even at the risk of loss of life, endeavour to recapture the fugitives from Japan. All our hope lies in the speedy appearance of the *William*."

Still many anxious days elapsed, and the expected vessel had not appeared; but boats were seen continually sailing round the island, while the occupiers looked up to those lofty cliffs which excluded every one but the desperate strangers from this mysterious island. They even observed one boat drawn up and moored at the narrow beach, and four men disembarked to keep watch lest they should escape.

"Will we make a run down on the spalpeens, captain?" said Mike. "Will the mate and I be binding them, and lying them down aisy in their boat, and then sending them adrift to say, sure we'd not be throubled agin with the spies, not we?"

"I do not see the benefit of the act," said Madsimano; "the loss of four men would be a trifling impediment to these determined opponents."

"And I do not see the justice of it," added Mr.

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Sinclair. "These men have not yet made any aggression, and we have no right to bind or destroy them."

"Ay, ay, master," said Tom. "It's mean to fire on a ship before she shows her colours. But spying's fair again spies; and maybe you'd not mind Mike and I running down to hear their plans. We're poor hands at their lingo; but we've picked up a bit from Massee, and I fancy we'd make out their sailing-orders."

"I ought to undertake this duty," said Madsimano, "for I should at once understand the plans of these invaders; but my education has not taught me the active habits of your people; and I fear my descent of the cliffs could not be accomplished so secretly and adroitly as to escape detection. Therefore, my good father, with your permission I would advise that we should send out these two clever spies."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Tom and Mike sent out as Spies—The Plot of the Islanders—The Besieging Fleet—The Forlorn Hope—The *William* in sight—A Perilous Escape—Reception on Board—An American Captain—Arrival at Shanghai.

THEY waited till darkness shrouded their attempt, and then the whole party walked to the cliff, the two bold sailors descended, and the rest remained at the summit in great anxiety for their safety. The night birds rustling among the bushes accounted for any slight noise they made in their swift and cautious descent; and it was not long before they were perched in the branches of the mangrove, beneath which the

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boat of the islanders was moored, in which two of the boatmen were sleeping, while the other two were smoking and talking as they kept their reluctant watch; and the listeners were glad to hear that the language so much resembled that taught them by Massee that they could make out the purport.

"I would not care," said the first, "if they were men like ourselves; but if one was to leap down on us this minute, I do not think I could fire a gun. What would be the use of firing at the wild man of the woods, that is stronger than twenty men, and a bullet never hurts him."

"My opinion is," answered his companion, "that they are evil spirits. This island has always been full of them, and it's not safe to disturb them. But our chief has sent the junk to Nagasaki, to bring back soldiers and police; they do not care for bad spirits, and we shall leave them to drive them out if they can. Did you hear a flutter of wings?"

"Ay, to be sure I did," said the first; "but that may be the flying-fox, they say it never sleeps at night. But, Jalong, how will the soldiers mount up yonder; it's fit only for wild men, or birds?"

"Likely enough they'll mine it," replied Jalong, "and blow it up altogether with gunpowder. All we have to do is to watch that nobody gets out from it. Lonely work it is; but to-morrow we shall have company enough."

Then the sentinels became drowsy and silent; and satisfied that no more information could be procured from them, the men ascended the cliff with no further accident except hurling down a large stone, which plainly struck some one below, for the man uttered a loud cry, and fired his gun; but this random shot had no effect, and the spies landed safely with their very unpleasant information. It was now certain that they should be besieged; they had no mode of escape, and it was scarcely to be hoped that the *William* should

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arrive for some days to assist them, as it was not yet a month since they left their prison. Though no immediate danger could be dreaded, it was still with very anxious hearts that they watched and slept alternately, till morning showed them a perfect fleet of boats flanking the island on the west side as far as they could see. On this part only was it accessible, as on every other side the perpendicular cliffs were washed by the sea.

However vexatious this siege might be, they still indulged a hope that they might contrive some means to descend at the south, if the *William* was near enough to send out a boat, for they now despaired of recovering their own; and these fears were soon confirmed, for before the day was over, a loud shout below attracted the attention of the besieged, and they saw with great vexation, the good boat which had brought them from captivity, dragged from its hiding-place, and taken possession of by their enemies. It was thus plain to the islanders by what means these strangers had reached the island, and even the most superstitious were now convinced that they were warring against men, and not evil spirits.

They watched incessantly during the day for a sail, and just before night-fall a speck was seen to approach, and joyful hopes rose in every heart; alas! too soon crushed, by discovering through the glass, that the vessel was in fact a large Japanese junk, which they had reason to believe was manned by their enemies the police and soldiers of the incensed government.

"We shall be hemmed in on every side," exclaimed Madsimano; "my good father, my dear friends, my impetuosity has led you to destruction."

"And the boat stolen from us!" cried Walter. "But, surely, we may find caves where we can enclose ourselves, or we may hide in those thick chestnuts by the lake. We have escaped before by such means."

"Not from the keen-eyed police of Japan," replied

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Madsimano. "Bury yourself in the earth and they will dig you up. Nothing can escape their vigilance, and if they once set their feet on the island, we can only escape them by precipitating ourselves into the sea."

"That would be incurring an eternal punishment to avoid a temporary suffering," said Mr. Sinclair. "A Christian waits for God's will. We will yet pray and hope."

The darkness was at least a reprieve, for though they were assured the junk must be anchored near the island, no offensive measures could be adopted before daylight.

"It's like enough, captain," said Tom, "that the *William* will be out at sea by this; what say you if we lighted up a signal fire, and showed our flag."

Madsimano gloomily consented. A large fire was lighted on a pointed rock at the south, and before it waved the white flag, to denote their position, and the watchers of the night kept up the fire, and gazed out into the darkness with beating hearts. Suddenly a bright light blazed up at not more than the distance of a mile, and the joyful watch waked the sleepers to make ready for action. But nothing could be done but to muster at the point, with their arms in their girdles, and their hearts nerved for danger.

Now a smaller speck of light was seen dancing over the waves and gradually drawing near the signal on the rock. It was past midnight when the waning moon broke the darkness, as a month before it had risen to favour their flight from Japan, and it now showed them the boat, below the perpendicular cliff of great height which still separated them from this happy means of escape.

"Hold off," said Tom, "we were reckoning they would pull in hereabout, and Mike and I have been rigging up a whip to lower you all."

In fact, the men had been for some days employed

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in twisting ropes of the bark of a tree which Massee had pointed out to them, and had finished about twenty yards; and though this was certainly short of the height of the cliff, it would be useful in the descent, which they proposed to make chiefly by clinging to the shrubs, and holding the rope as a security. This rope they knotted, as only a seaman knows how to knot a cable, round a large tree that hung over the top of the cliff, and Tom insisted on descending first to test his work. By the time he had safely reached the base of the precipice the boat was ready to receive him, and, he found, had brought a coil of rope to assist them. It was no difficulty to the expert sailor to ascend and secure the second rope, thus affording certain support to the timid, and one after the other the party descended happily, though Mike declared he'd at any time have lowered a woman sooner than that lubberly *Japanned* fisherman.

They were in the boat floating towards the *William*, when the morning light showed the junk anchored at the west, and at the same time a movement on board proved that they had also been discovered; but before the Japanese sailors could weigh anchor, and the clumsy craft could be worked round, the fugitives had been received on board the *William*, which sailed off with a fair wind beyond the pursuit of the drowsy pursuers.

What a joyful meeting there was! How Minna clung to her playfellows, embraced her good father, shook hands with Tom and Mike, and told Madsimano he should be her old brother, and she would never part with him. Even the dignified Miss Griffin was moved at seeing again the sharers of so many trials; she had to explain to them all the indignities of questions and examinations which she had endured at Nagasaki, and to dwell on the indifferent accommodation of the Dutch merchant-vessel, and the excessive vulgarity and rudeness of the American who commanded it. "His inattention to women," said she,

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"proclaims at once his ill-breeding and his country. Any hints I have deigned to offer him respecting the routine of management, he receives with coarse words; even with oaths. The hours for meals are unusual, the meat is ill-cooked, and he swallows his own food in a disgusting and rapid way, and is out of patience with our dawdling English ways, as he is impertinent enough to term our habits. I trust, Captain Madsimano, that your presence may enforce respect from the man."

"I will leave all interference to Mr. Sinclair," said he, "who knows best what is the power of the captain; with us the *Taisho* is despotic in his own ship."

"We must conciliate, my dear Miss Griffin," said Mr. Sinclair. "We have no right to command. We must remember that we are passengers forced upon him—you by the government of Japan, and we on terms which, though not yet arranged, must necessarily be indulgent."

They were summoned to breakfast in the cabin of Captain Sharp, and found him looking very uneasy, evidently alarmed at the admission of so many poor and hungry passengers; and even before they sat down to table, he said to Mr. Sinclair, the oldest of the party,—

"Short reckonings make long friends: I'm a plain man, and my way is—money before manners. I guess I'm Sharp by name and sharp by natur'—not easy done. I cannot butter my bread with fair words; and I'd like to see cash clean slick down, and know how much I'm to realize for your grub and your berths to Indy, as per treaty with yon windy old woman."

Mr. Sinclair attempted to make an appeal to the forbearance and humanity of the American; but as soon as Madsimano was made acquainted with his demands, he interrupted an address, which his penetration discovered would be unavailing, by saying,—

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"I pay all demands. Make your charge, and I will immediately satisfy you; but first, I presume, we may eat our breakfast."

"Well, seeing you're agreeable to square up," said the captain, "I'll not object, and I calculate you'll be ready to pay slick from Nagasaki to Calcutta; so here's your breakfast with prettier notions than you'll see in your English ships—tea and extra fine American biscuit, none the worse for a long voyage, if you give 'em a rap to send the weevils out; and here's capital red herrings and frizzled bacon; and I calculate you'll not often meet with such fixings out at sea nowhere," and a glance of reproach was shot at Miss Griffin.

The viands were not delicate, but the novelty of sitting down to a social breakfast, even with the scanty requisites of the ship, tempted the rescued people to eat, and to thank God for their refreshment.

"I guess you'll be a missioner," said the American to Mr. Sinclair; "you'll not have filled your pockets with mopusses yonder away. It's a poor trade is the praying trade; it seldom pays."

"It is the noble privilege of the Christian," answered Mr. Sinclair, "to do God's work on earth, waiting for the reward of his labours in heaven."

"Them fine words is your stock in trade, friend," said the American; "but I calculate you'll find most men likes cash down better nor long bills with your indorsement. Money for work—that's my notion. Clean hands and full pockets carry you quietly through life."

Walter thought if Captain Sharp's hands were no cleaner in a figurative sense than they were literally, he was certainly not in that satisfactory path of which he boasted; and good Mr. Sinclair felt a great shock to hear a man professing to be a Christian speak of gain as the aim of his life. But, breakfast being concluded, all conversation on this topic was set aside by the wary trader producing his books, and

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drawing out an estimate of the expense of transporting the men to Calcutta, Miss Griffin and her pupil being already paid for by the Japanese government.

"And a hard bargain they made," he grumbled; "I guess it wouldn't pay for coffee and fresh bread and eggs, as Granny yonder called out for."

"Let us retire, Miss Gayton," said the offended lady. "Such coarse language is unfit for your ears. Fortunately, the Emperor of Japan had discrimination enough to engage for us a private cabin. There, sacred from all intrusion, I invite you, my true friends, to visit us at all times."

And Miss Griffin retired with becoming dignity, leading her reluctant pupil, who was very unwilling to be separated from her young friends.

The demands of Captain Sharp were exorbitant, but the necessity of the case rendered it expedient to agree to them; and Madsimano insisted on advancing the whole sum, at least till they reached Calcutta, when Walter hoped to repay his share. They were vexed to find they should be detained a week or ten days at Shanghai, to take in a consignment of tea; but the young became easily reconciled to the delay, when they thought of a peep at the Chinese.

"At all events," said Miss Griffin, when they were assembled in her cabin, "we shall be within British jurisdiction, and no longer exposed to the impertinent questions, and disrespectful investigations of barbarians, for such I hold the officials of Japan to be, though, in deference to our accomplished friend Captain Madsimano, I will allow that gentlemen may be found among the educated classes."

"And you remember dear Kooda, Miss Griffin," said Minna, "and Madame Kooda, they were certainly as elegant in manner, and as kind in heart, as any British people. How they wept when we parted; and what gifts they heaped upon us! such fans, and screens, and jars! all of which the police at Nagasaki

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took away from us, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Miss Griffin."

"A most iniquitous affectation of justice!" exclaimed Miss Griffin. "In vain I pointed out to them that the gifts of friendship were sacred among all civilized nations. They turned a deaf ear to my words, and even with violence snatched away the *souvenirs*, so dear to us from being the gifts of friends we should see no more. This, Captain Madsimano, I pronounce to be barbarism; Japan is yet uncivilized!"

Madsimano bowed; he was not yet able to argue with the voluble and positive lady, and therefore prudently submitted.

"But when they did at last permit us to come on board the *William*," said Minna, "how I wished for you, my dear brothers, to look at the charming, new, busy scene from the deck. There were so many fishing-boats and strange ships in the bay, and so many pretty curious houses rising one above another at the sides of the bay, among groves of trees and green hills, and lovely gardens. Everything looked so beautiful, that I wondered how the people could be unhappy or unjust, when God had been so kind to them."

"Ah, my child," replied Mr. Sinclair, "the fairest works of nature are stained by the sin of man. Wealth and peace produce luxury; learning fosters pride; it is only the true wisdom—the knowledge of God, that can give peace of mind, and harmony of conduct."

Tom and Mike readily accommodated themselves to their new position, and were soon useful and popular with the crew. Massee was timid, suspicious, and ill at ease; he sat on deck smoking, and regarding with wonder the constant employment of the sailors in occupations which appeared to him unaccountable or useless; but after a few days he began to understand the meaning of their work, and, finally, from his good nature, desirous to assist them. This afforded the crew great amusement, and the cheerfulness among

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the seamen certainly exceeded that in the cabin, where the passengers were cribbed in narrow lodgings, annoyed with the vulgarity and meanness of the American, and thoroughly disgusted with their coarse diet.

"Look out, Master Frank," said Tom, as the boys stood on deck one fine morning, glad to escape from the close cabins. "Look, yonder away lies the China coast! Queer dogs the fellows are there, with their shaved crowns and pig-tails! I'd liked well to have made a cruise among 'em with you, had we been touching at Canton; but this here Shangy I've never anchored at, and I can't say how it may turn out. And, my boy, now we're drawing nigh port, what think you Mike and me will have to turn to at Calcutta? Not a penny, nor a rag of clothes, nor a friend, but just ourselves, have we. And then, Master Walter's father, you see he'll be all in the land service, and can't help us to a berth."

"I'm no better off than you, Tom," answered Frank; "but what of that? we have hands, and we shall find work."

"And sure, boys," said Mike, "may be Captain Madasmany will be the gintleman as will be fitting out a ship, and rating us on her books. Och! isn't it the prince of captains he'd be, and wouldn't I be an illigant cook, anyhow? and won't ye say that same, Master Frank?"

"I don't think he has a bit of taste for seamanship, Mike," answered Frank; "but he's too good a fellow to see us want when he is rich; so think no more on that. I only wish this dull voyage was over. I say, Mike, run up, and take a look out; we cannot be far from land."

"Now then, Master Frank," cried Mike, from the top-gallant, "sure it's you as has the luck! Land, ho!"

Great joy the proclamation diffused through the vessel, which was now trimmed into somewhat neat

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order; and the men were clean and well-dressed when the *William* reached the mouth of the mighty river Yang-tse-Kiang, which may with some truth be named the richest river of the world, flowing through lands of prosperous cultivation, which are crowded with a population of human beings that are certainly not savage, and receiving in its known course of three thousand miles the waters of so many tributaries, that the people proudly and justly name it the "Father of Rivers." After passing up to the town of Woo-sing, the *William* turned into the river Wang-poo, the last of the tributaries, and, seven miles above the junction, anchored in the port of Shanghai, amidst a forest of masts of the vessels of every nation, a marvellous sight to the young and inexperienced.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

First Sight of the Chinese—An Old Acquaintance—The Chinese Hotel—An Awkward Inquiry—A Visit from a Chinese Merchant—The Streets of China—The Villa of Ki-chung—The Women of China.

As all the passengers were weary of the ship, Captain Sharp ordered out a boat, directed them to an English hotel, and they were landed amidst a throng of foreign sailors, beyond which was seen the orderly Chinese crowd of shaved heads, all exactly alike, as the boys declared, all intent on watching the new arrivals, all unemployed, and all men—no women mingled in this idle mob. At first the voyagers felt confused at this sudden restoration to society, but Tom soon recovered his presence of mind, and going

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up to a well-dressed man of English appearance tapped him on the shoulder, and called out,—

"Ship, ho!"

The man started, and turned round; and to the great astonishment of Tom, he beheld the well-remembered Scotch face of Captain Mackay, who stammered out in great embarrassment,—

"I dinna ken ye, mon; ye'd better gang your gait. I've gude friends here who will see I'm not harmed wi' a wheen idle loons like to ye."

"I'm not the man as could harm an old comrade, Captain Mackay," answered Tom. "I'm as pleased as Punch to see you're afloat yet, which you'd not been now, if ye'd not scudded off in time. There were a hot chase astern, master, and you must have gone under a press of sail to get clear of the rogues. We've had a sore tug ourselves to break away from our moorings."

"Ye'll be a' here, likely?" said Mackay in a peevish and interrogative tone. "What tuk it into yer heads to choose this port amang all else?"

"I reckon we were like yourself," replied Tom; "we'd little to choose, and were glad to catch the first offer. But come along, master, and hail your old friends yonder."

"I'm not that prepared," muttered he, "that I can mak' up my accounts just now; I need a bit time. Ye ken, Tom, mon, I'm clean ruined. I canna answer calls here, they'll hae to bide a wee."

"They'll never be asking questions about paying off, I'll be bound, captain," said Tom; "they're not that line of folks. Pilot us to this grand hotel, and then we'll read off your log."

It was with some reluctance that Mackay was induced to draw near his old friends, who were unfeignedly glad to find he had escaped all the dangers of his desperate flight. He soon beckoned some chairmen, who brought a sedan for the two ladies, into

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which Miss Griffin stepped with becoming dignity, and Minna followed, highly amused; then the two monkey-looking men caught up the poles, and trotted off with the chair, while the rest followed through the crowded streets, where everything struck them with astonishment, as much from its unexpected elegance, as from its novelty. Shops, quite open in the front, were filled with curious and exquisite specimens of porcelain, rich silks, fragrant flowers, delicate fruits, and meat and confectionary, arranged in the most tempting variety.

Sedan-chairs were trotting about in every direction; porters bending under the load of chests of tea; the barber was employed in his vocation in the open street; the busy crowds were hastening to or from the pier, while the stately mandarin, seated in his palanquin, with his attendants holding his umbrella over his head, or carrying his spears, was slowly borne along. The Europeans were charmed with the toy-like houses, with the tiny balconies, and the tiny potted trees that filled them. Everything glittered with gay colours and gilding, and though they had a long walk to the hotel, they forgot all weariness in their amusement. They were shown into a spacious saloon, cool and pleasant, the light softened through painted paper windows, and the room amply furnished with carved chairs, tables of all sizes, cushions, mats, and vases of flowers, and all looked round with a sigh of enjoyment, as they contrasted the saloon with the musty ship-cabins.

Miss Griffin seated herself in an easy chair with her usual equanimity, but Minna threw herself upon a cushion, and declared it would be long before she felt at home among civilized chairs and tables,—for the cabin furniture of the *William* was of the rudest description. Madsimano, too, confessed that he did not yet feel quite easy in complying with European habits. As the saloon was so large, the men were allowed a portion for themselves, rather than dismissing them

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into the strange hotel; and the wonder-struck Massee was established on a mat, at the lower part of the room, staring wildly at all he saw, while attendants served tea, and dinner was ordered.

The tea, unadulterated and delicious in flavour, wholly unlike the highly-dried teas sent to England, was served in elegant little porcelain cups, and accompanied by the most delicious sweetmeats, very agreeable to all but the two sailors, who pronounced the entertainment flimsy and unsatisfactory. Mr. Sinclair remarked that Mackay, in a manner very different to his usual domineering, bold style, shrunk back, and was taking his tea with the sailors at the lower part of the room, and suspecting that he wished to shun explanations, he became uneasy about the unsettled money transactions, and calling him forward, he said,—

"We shall all be glad, Captain Mackay, to learn how you succeeded in escaping to China, and what your pursuits and future plans are."

"Varra weel, Maister Sinclair," answered he, "David Mackay niver yet had a hole picked in his coat, by ony leevin' mon, if it weren't for that bit mischance wi' yon gun; and I dinna objeck to speak out, and tell ye a' ye demand; freely, ye mind, for I haud that ye canna set up ony reet to catechise me. Ye'll ken, likely, hoo I crap out o' yon cage-jail amang them heathens; and oh! mon, I'd a sair feight for my life afore I set my feet fast on deck of a ship ance again."

Then Mackay told them his story till he was taken up by the Dutch ship, which he learnt was bound to Shanghai for tea, and thence to Java. When they reached the Chinese port, he determined not to proceed to Java with the ship, but to remain, as he said, "to do a bit of trade, to make up a better balance-sheet for Van Hookem and Co."

"It was clear to me," he continued, "that every mon o' ye would be murdered by yon bloody-minded rogues, and what mair could ye need warldly gear?

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Now, ye'll mind, there was them bit notes, and I reckoned ye'd never be better nor warse for 'em ; and that sma' matter of money might be turned owre to profit. Sae I'll speak truth ; I tuik myself to some of our braw Scottish traders, and gie'd 'em a gliff o' yon bills, and the gude names upon 'em ; and they set aboot it, and spiered here and there, and got satisfaction, and at the end, they discounted the bills at a heavy percentage. Then I vested the proceeds in a capital lot of tea, which I leeted on a bargain. Now, hear to me—it was a' fair and honest : I meaned to carry out my lot to Calcutta to sell, and then pay owre the balance to Mr. Thornville and Mr. Gayton, deductin', as was fair and just, the sum due for yer board and lodgin' out to Japan, and nae mair ; that payment ganging to account of Van Hookem and Co., and aiblins a sma' profit to my ain pouch. Now, I'd like to hear ony mon say that David Mackay was gi'en to roguery in this bit matter o' trading. I'll not deny but I was a wheen owreta'en when I clapped een on ye a' leevin,' when I'd marked ye down i' my mind dead men ; but I've getten owre that shock like, and come what may, thank God ye're a' to the fore, yet."

However repugnant to the honourable principles of Mr. Sinclair this mercenary transaction appeared, he knew by experience that the worldly Scotsman's code of morality was always relaxed to accommodate itself to his interest. He, therefore, contented himself with a mild remonstrance on the hasty conclusion Mackay had drawn, and on the somewhat unsafe appropriation of property which was certainly not his own. Then he proceeded to inquire how and when the captain meant to convey his stock of tea to Calcutta.

"Freightage is desperately high frae this port," answered he, "but if there's room for my lading in the *William*, which they tell me is a fair sound craft, I maun try mak' a bargin wi' Captain Sharp. But I'll

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hae to luik aboot me keenly anent the siller, for yon American fellows are deep hands; they'll niver bate a bawbee, not if they ken ye hae niver another i' yer pouch, and ye canna, for yer life, trade cannily wi' them. There's nae mair honesty i' their dealings, nor there's saut in a crowdie."

Frank and Walter enjoyed the joke of Mackay railing against the worldliness of the American, and Mr. Sinclair was by no means highly gratified at the prospect of having the two men disputing for the rest of the voyage. But he had some compassion on Mackay, who meant to be honest, according to his own standard of honesty; and he recommended Tom to take, and introduce him to Sharp, while dinner was getting ready.

In the meantime all retired to their several apartments to enjoy the luxury of a bath, and such changes as were procured for the men by the people of the hotel. Miss Griffin and Minna had been liberally supplied with dresses by the good Madam Kooda, before they left Japan, which, amidst the spoliation at Nagasaki, had been spared, and they now appeared in flowing silk robes, to the great admiration of Frank and Walter, who, with Mr. Sinclair and Madsimano, were now clothed in the wide trowsers and long gown of the Chinese—an agreeable dress in the hot season, though somewhat grotesque to English taste. Before long the American and Scottish captains returned with Tom, apparently on friendly terms.

"An extra hand for bed and board," said the American, "is not to be sneezed at, if it's a reg'lar paid job. Captain Mackay, I guess, is an almighty keen trader, but we've settled down to a bargain, and now we calculate to have a drink upon it. What's your liquor, man?"

"Glenlivet, when I can get haud on't," answered Mackay—"but that's not in Cheeny. Onyhow, I'm

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nae that nice anent my dram ; but, mon alive ! we eat our dinner in our country afore we start to drink."

"That's because your beggarly country is all in the dark yet," said Sharp. "It 'll take years afore you ever tread on the heels of our great nation, if it were only just in such matters as your grub and your drinks. It stands to reason, that if you swallow a nice, smart drink before dinner, you'll eat twice as much after it."

"And where's yer profit in that, mon," replied Mackay. "A bonnie trick it were, gin yer passengers swallowed their drams, and doubled their rations, and paid down nae mair nor single eaters. Nay, nay, I'll mak' nae objection to take a drop here, for hottle folks mak' awfu' charges for your dinner ; but I haud it's an unprofitable practice in the way of trade."

Sharp stood out for his "juleps" and "cobblers;" and the two keen seamen withdrew to the bar to procure some representative of their national drams, previous to the appearance of a dinner which startled and puzzled them greatly, though, on trial, it produced, on the whole, great satisfaction. There were exquisite soups, pungent stews of unknown limbs which might belong to any of the smaller animals of creation, and Walter barked, Frank mewed, and Minna suggested "rat" as the owners. Then came *purées*, the essence of delicate meats ; highly-flavoured pickles, light pastry, rich preserves, and delicious fresh fruits served on ice, with sherbet, and samshoo, the fiery spirit distilled from rice. Besides the usual ivory chopsticks, English knives and forks were placed on the table, for the convenience of the strangers, and English, or rather Irish, servants attended, after their fashion, to the comfort of the guests, and reconciled Mike to all the petty grievances of strange customs.

"Would ye be crediting it now, Master Frank," said he ; "there's O'Connell there, the head waither, sure is'nt he full of ould ancient blood ; and wasn't all them that were before him the grand haroes, and he

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himself head waither at Cheeny. And sure it's himself as kapes all the accounts, and she a quiet misthress as sits on her cushion all through the blessed day, and O'Connell hisself making the customers pay; and doesn't he do that same, musha! A dhrop of beer niver to be had under silver-money, and a dram of poteen for a month's wages, no less! Save us! Sure doesn't O'Connell spake Cheeny, quite illigant, barrin' its quare nonsense; and wasn't I thrying the man at the shop with the grand ould Irish, and he, poor ignorant haythen, not understanding a word I was saying."

"That's likely enough Mike," said Frank; "but this O'Connell will be a trump card for us. He can tell us all about these little prancing monkey-men; and I say, Mike, ask him if it would be safe for us to have a run through this strange town. Wally and I are in for a lark, and Tom and you could go with us; but Mr. Sinclair is so much afraid that we shall be taken off by the police."

"You see he's no ways used to a sailor's life in port, Master Frank," said Tom. "But I expect he'll trust you, if I'm at the helm; so we'll have a cruise to-morrow morning."

In the evening, Ki-chung, a Chinese merchant, with whom Mackay and Sharp had been trading, having heard from them the story of the English passengers, came in great state in his palanquin to visit them, and was ushered up to them arrayed in his rich brocaded silk, with a splendid fan in his girdle. With profound bows, he pronounced some words in that strange dialect, which is readily acquired by the Chinaman, and which he is satisfied is English.

"Velly glad—all gentlemen—you make see all gentlemen—all come—me number one pigeon man—big wife, small piecy child, all come."

Mackay translated this jargon, to signify that the whole party were invited to visit the merchant; and

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the invitation being readily accepted, the answer was communicated to him by Mackay in the same Canton English, as he called it, and with which he seemed perfectly acquainted. Then Mike was dispatched to request his countryman to serve refreshments to the visitor, and again the small porcelain cups of that delicate infusion of the slightly-dried tea, unknown except in China, were brought, accompanied by the never-failing tray, divided into many compartments, each of which contained some different delicious sweetmeat; after partaking of which, the guest with many unintelligible compliments and requests for custom, assuring them "velly good pigeon him get," returned to his palanquin, and was borne off by his coolies in all the state of a mandarin.

As Captain Sharp would still be detained some days, his passengers desired some recreation; for the confinement in the hotel was scarcely more agreeable than that in the cabin. They were glad therefore to dress themselves in newly-purchased finery, and, engaging palanquins, to set out under the guidance of Mackay to visit their new acquainance. They enjoyed much their transit through the streets of gay shops; and opened the windows of the vehicles that they might see all the novelties, till they found that they themselves, easily recognized by their European countenance and air, formed a spectacle equally amusing to the idle crowd, who followed them with loud remarks, and bursts of laughter; and when Minna rested her pretty gloved hand on the edge of the window, they touched it with screams of astonishment, and even pulled her long fair hair.

"Miss Gayton," said her governess, with great indignation, "I forbid you to smile on these savages. You encourage their rude and insolent behaviour, nor should I be surprised if they were actually to carry us off in the palanquin."

"What could they do with us, Miss Griffin?" said

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Minna, laughing merrily. "They are not cannibals, they do not eat human flesh. I think they are simple, harmless people; but how ugly they are! Those long slits of eyes do look so cunning; and how hot the bare, smooth head must be in the sun. The Japanese have more sense, with their sombrero hats, though, certainly, if every one of these men had a sombrero, there would be no room to pass in the streets. Then how odd it is that they should all be men. Do you think there are no women in China, Miss Griffin?"

"In most eastern countries," answered she, "the women are secluded. If it were a voluntary act, there is a becoming propriety in the custom; but as the result of a despotism practised over the sex, I protest against it."

"Poor women," said Minna, "I hope we shall see some to-day, and then we can judge if they are happy."

On their arrival at the handsome villa residence of Ki-chung, they were conveyed through that region of miniature landscape fancies—a Chinese garden, amidst groves of dwarfed forest-trees, ornamental bridges thrown over tiny canals, gilt pagodas, artificial rock-work covered with luxuriant ferns and creeping plants; ponds dotted over with little green isles, and covered with the superb pink Nelumbium, the pride of China; while on every side bloomed the brilliant flowers so carefully cultivated in that country—the superb magnolia, the tree peony, with all the lovely varieties of gardenias, azaleas, camellias, and a host of brilliant novelties, which never bloom so gloriously as on their native soil.

The merchant, who was ready to receive them at the open windows of his saloon, was in ecstasy at their admiration of his garden, and in his strange jargon declared it was "good pigeon,—number one—velly good." Then he introduced them into a handsome saloon, furnished

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with chairs and tables of English fashion, though the various elegant trifles scattered over them were truly Chinese. At a small table were seated the wife and daughters of Ki-chung, who rose and bowed before the strangers, and the polite merchant made his guests understand that it was in conformity to the English custom, that his family thus appeared in public.

Miss Griffin and Minna, very much delighted to meet with their own sex once more, endeavoured to make themselves understood by means of their small knowledge of Japanese, which is in some measure the same language as the Chinese, though the pronunciation differs greatly; and after the first difficulties were surmounted, they began, laughing at each other's pronunciation, to understand and hold some conversation with each other, and with the aid of Madsimano they got on very well.

Then Minna told the astonished Chinese girls her own strange adventures and heroic struggles; and they trembled to think that one of womankind should be exposed to such trials. Ki-chung himself looked disturbed at the recital, as if fearful that such exciting stories should awaken a revolutionary spirit among these tame and drowsy women of the Celestial Empire, who seemed to have no aim beyond that of dressing themselves to the greatest advantage, in which the fair ladies had certainly succeeded. Their gorgeous blue brocaded robes, gold muslin trowsers, delicate silk stockings, and tiny silk slippers, and the rich masses of black hair wound round their heads, entwined with brilliant flowers, formed a costume becoming and graceful. But the total absence of intellectual cultivation was evident from their rapid and uninteresting conversation; and, as Miss Griffin afterwards remarked, it was vain to hope for the improvement and elevation of the character of the Chinese, if they could not be induced to begin by educating their women.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

The Opinions of the Visitors—Tom's Chinese Cruise—A Mob of Barbarians—An English Protector—Up the River—Farewell to China—The Storm in the Straits—The fate of the *William*—Escape to Singapore.

WITH due ceremony, the party separated; the ladies, with mutual pity for each other—the placid women of China rejoicing in their luxurious indolence; and the English women equally grateful that they had freedom of thought, mental employment, and the perfect use of their limbs. When they reached the hotel, they could not forbear a little criticism on their new acquaintances.

"Did you ever see such odd-looking useless feet as they had?" said Minna. "Oh, Frank, how would you ever have got me dragged through the rugged woods of Borneo if I had had feet like theirs?"

"Hoofs, you mean, Minna," replied Frank. "Cover the hoofs of a cow with a fine bit of silk, and you have the exact model they have copied."

"How their feet must ache," she said. "Our kind friends in Japan had more sense than to cramp their feet in such queer slippers."

"The deformity is caused by art," said Madsimano. "Even in infancy the toes are bent over and bandaged, the pressure increasing from year to year, till at last the ball of the foot fits into the hollow of the sole, and forms that shapeless mass, or hoof, as Frank calls it, on which the poor victim is for ever after doomed to totter about."

"Well," said Frank, "I hope one of the first reforms the English introduce here, may be the suppression of cruelty to the foot. Let us have a run out,

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Minna, to show them the advantage of having the natural use of the feet."

"Not in the streets, Mr. Frank," said Miss Griffin. "Minna will be thrown down by the rude mob; besides, ladies do not appear in the streets of China."

"Then, at all events, I suppose Mr. Sinclair," said Frank, "there can be no harm in Walter and I looking about us. Tom wants to show us the lions."

Mr. Sinclair was alarmed, but Tom promised to be prudent, and Mike and he were allowed to set out with the two boys. They proceeded along a street of *hongs* or warehouses, where coolies were moving along, groaning a monotonous chorus, as they bent under the weight of chests of tea, or bales of silk and other merchandise, carried on poles over their shoulders; the boys were amused with their cries, which Tom said all the porters habitually uttered as they toiled along. Then they came upon the broad embankment of the river, and looked with wonder on the huge, curiously-rigged junks which lay at anchor, nor could Tom and Mike forbear pointing out, with derision, the defects of the *lubberly craft.*

"And I say, Mr. Frank," continued Tom; "them there shabby, dirty chaps carrying them coloured buttons a top of their caps, them's mandarins, they say They're not in their Sunday togs, I reckon; they're looking sharp after us; so let's off, Mr. Frank. I'll pilot you to a decent sort of a fair, like that O'Connell showed us, where you'll see John Chinaman at full length, and that's not much of a length either. Come, make sail, my boys."

They did make sail, and soon came to the spacious tea-gardens, where they found the usual attractions of such festive spots. Here were the accomplished jugglers, the noisy peep-shows, the amusing ventriloquist, and the laughing crowd. The gay booths were filled with guests seated at small tables playing games; or drinking tea, and eating sweet cakes; while the usual

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scenery depicted on the old China tea-cups, the narrow canals, with their wooden bridges, the artificial rocks, and the flower-pots, delighted the boys with the picturesque effect; and as they drank their tea, and ate their delicious macaroons, they longed for Minna to see the pretty sight.

"But we will go to a shop and buy her one of those gay fans," said Frank; "I know the right word."

"And I will get her one of those lovely caged birds," said Walter.

The shops which surrounded the gardens were brilliant with the paper-lanterns, embroideries, fans, and pretty curiosities of the country. The boys were much amused to examine these, but Mike was greatly affronted at the sight of a caricature, which was cleverly drawn. It represented an English ship boarded by the gallant Chinamen, who were waving their swords, while the English barbarians, crouched at their feet, were holding up their hands to implore mercy. This was certainly too much for the blood of British sailors to endure. Tom abused the artists safely in English; but Mike, with Irish impetuosity, seized the obnoxious picture and tore it to pieces.

The English party had previously been followed by a mob of Chinese idlers, smoking opium, and gabbling offensive remarks on the foreigners; but this imprudent act of aggression, added to the consciousness of the advantage of numbers, roused them to action. There was a universal yell and a rush on the offenders; their garments were seized and torn from them, and blows were made at them; then Tom drew out his knife, and called out,—

"Show your steel, Mike; but don't hit if you can keep clear of them. Stick close behind me, lads; now cut along; never look behind you; they're rank cowards, and we'll never strike our colours to such piratical rogues."

The two boys were luckily provided with stout canes, and by the bold use of these, and the formidable sight

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of the knives of Tom and Mike, they managed to force their way onwards, keeping in a close line behind each other, and returning every blow, but never dealing one unprovoked. At length they got out of the gardens, and reaching the narrow streets, found they could proceed with less difficulty, for many of their idle followers, alarmed at the risk of encountering the police, drew back to the gardens to continue their amusements. There still remained, however, a vexatious train of persecutors, who, though now afraid to use blows, showered the most opprobrious language on the northern barbarians.

An occasional menacing gesture from Tom, as he seized the long tail of some front-rank screaming offender, threatening to cut it off with his knife, produced great terror; for a Chinaman shudders at the disgrace of losing this elegant appendage, and thus aided them in keeping the noisy mob from committing any extreme violence. And no sooner had they cleared the way a little, than they set off to run with such swiftness that they soon distanced their laggardly followers, though their wild course still provoked more notice than they thought safe, and they were glad to seek refuge in one of the open *hongs*, or warehouses by the river, above the entrance to which they had observed an English name; where they found themselves in the midst of a busy crowd of clerks, packers, coolies, and warehousemen, presided over by a grave man in a Chinese dress, but with an unmistakable English face.

"Please, sir," said Frank, "will you give us shelter a bit. We're English travellers, you see, and we've been set on, and followed by a mob of these Chinese snobs, who have shown fight in their cowardly way, torn our clothes off our backs, and showered blows on our shoulders. We had some plucky fellows among us, or we should have been thoroughly licked; and may-be lost lives or limbs." The English merchant

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smiled; he had been so long an exile that he had almost forgotten the species, "school-boy," in a country where boys are not a distinct species.

But the words of Frank awakened old recollections, and he held out his hand gladly to welcome the boy.

"Come into my private office, my friends," said he "I will not only give you refuge, but a safe-conduct to your abode. It is nearly twenty years since I left my dear native land; but my heart still clings to it; and I cannot make a home among these unmannered scoundrels."

He led them into a cool, pleasant back room, where a very tempting English lunch was spread of fowls, ham, and bottled English ale, and invited them to share it; an invitation not at all unacceptable to the heated and harassed fugitives, who did full justice to the excellent viands, and amused Mr. Martin, their host, with the story of their wanderings, and their hopes of finding themselves at last in harbour. He gave the two boys some sound advice about their future conduct, and recommended Frank to enter some merchant's office in Calcutta, where he might make himself independent, and have time to improve his mind.

"I've a good deal of way to make up, I know, sir," said the boy, "after fifteen months of almost idleness, and you see I'm now nearly sixteen, and fit for nothing. I dare say Mr. Thornville will think I'm a graceless fellow, and have led Wally into all his troubles; and I'm rightly served."

"You're just a brave young chap, Master Frank," said Tom; "and I'd say fitter to handle a rope nor a pen; and that, I take it, Mr. Martin, is about as useful a tack as a lad can go on."

"We differ in our opinion, my good friend," answered Mr. Martin; "but all classes of working men have their use in the world, and our young friend must consult his taste and his fitness for such occupation as he selects."

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The young boys began to feel uneasy as the prudent Mr. Martin went on discussing their future regular daily labours, and they were relieved when, after taking leave with many thanks of their kind entertainer, he showed them out by a different entrance, and pointed out a short and direct road to the hotel; and as they walked leisurely through the streets, they felt glad they were still free, though labouring under the stigma of truant school-boys.

The next morning the coolies of Ki-chung came with palanquins to convey the party to the river, where a boat was lying, somewhat in the form of a Venetian gondola. It had a neat little cabin with glass windows for the ladies, in which were lockers, stored with refreshments, while a stove at the stern was prepared to heat the inevitable tea-kettle. Ki-chung was himself waiting to see his friends on board, and to make his parting compliments before the boat moved off, sculled by means of one large propeller at the stern, at which three men were engaged, who were watched by Tom and Mike with wonder and unqualified contempt. But the voyagers were carried briskly on, and enjoyed their passage among the junks and European vessels till, losing sight of the town, they saw the wide, fertile, cultivated plains around them, which produce the simple food that feeds the millions of this populous country.

Thus they passed busy villages, quiet Buddhist monasteries, picturesque pagodas, and groves of camphor-laurel, mulberry, orange, lemon, and the weeping cypress; the tall trees festooned with graceful garlands of the elegant purple wisteria. The lively scene amused the voyagers; and when coveys of pheasants started from the rice-grounds, the young sportsmen produced their guns to add to their enjoyment. This roused the drowsy boatmen from their stupor to say, "Why for you, gentlemen, make dead man, velly many man in licee;" and as they shouted to raise the game,

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they were startled to see the bare heads of a great number of men lifted up from among the rice, where they were busily employed, and where an unlucky shot might certainly have killed them. So the sporting was given up, and they were contented to watch the scenery, and the junks working up or returning from the manufacturing cities, laden with silk, cotton, or porcelain; amongst which they remarked some lazily-voyaging boats, to which the boatmen pointed with the significant word "Pilate"—meaning, however, not the name abhorred by the Christian, but "pirate" —for these unbusiness-like junks were filled with armed robbers, ready to fall on any solitary well-laden vessel in the night, and plunder it, and after disposing of the crew in a summary way, leaving the emptied junk to float down the river and tell its tale of spoliation, while they proceeded with their spoil to some island retreat.

Alarmed at this explanation, Miss Griffin begged to return before night, and became so uneasy, that they reluctantly turned back, and certainly not too soon, for darkness fell on them before they reached the town; and the rapid passing of a large junk, with its square sails crowded, was remarked by the terrified boatmen with the exclamation, "He hab got him!" Then they were distressed to understand that this was a successful pirate, returning with the plunder of some unfortunate vessel, after murdering, in all probability, the hapless crew.

After liberally rewarding the boatmen, who procured them palanquins to take them to their hotel, the voyagers were not sorry to find themselves in comparative safety, and all agreed that, though the Chinese appeared to be a quiet people, and the land a fruitful land, none of them would choose to live amidst such perils and treacheries. Even Massee declared that he loved his own peaceful fishing-ground better than the plenty, the fine shops, and the unprincipled habits of

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the Chinamen, and besought his master to take him away from the people who always spoke a lie.

Next morning the two captains visited their passengers to say that their arrangements were completed, and the vessel would leave harbour next day, the American taking an opportunity to say aside to Tom, "Yon Scotch fellow, I guess, can do a smart stroke of business. It would take a considerable keen hand to overreach he."

And Mackay lingered behind his friend to say, "He's a cunning chiel, yon Yankee; but I'll haud my een on him. I dinna think he's owre honest; and, amang oursels, his ship's not worth the insurance he's laid on her—an auld rotten craft that may haud togither to Calcutta, but that'll be a'. She's doomed; I'm the man that kens that."

"But if the ship be doomed, we are also doomed with it, Captain Mackay. This must be inquired into," said the alarmed Miss Griffin.

"Just hae dune wi' yer clavers, auld leddy," replied Mackay. "It'll sarve our purpose, and comes in cheap; for the rogue kens I'm up to his tricks. Tom and me hae our een open; we'll luik sharp after her. Ye needna fear for your lives. Think ye I'd trust my tea in her, if I didn't think to land it safe in Calcutta?"

Mr. Sinclair believed that where Mackay trusted his property they might venture to trust their lives. So he appeared Miss Griffin, and they spent the day in taking leave of their friend Ki-chung, and in buying such Chinese curiosities as their purses could afford.

The next morning, resuming their European dresses, they embarked again in the *William*, and were soon out of the crowded river, afloat in the wide sea amongst the thousand islands that guard the coast of China, and the thousand boats, of which many are the sole homes of numerous families—children born, living, and dying on the water.

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How calm and blue and beautiful looked that treacherous sea, which they knew might at any moment be changed to a foaming mass of mountainous waves, especially at this season, when the north-west monsoon was setting in; but they passed safely down the busy coast, and with little regret lost sight of China, and were launched into the wide ocean.

Mr. Sinclair was not without apprehension, for Tom had confirmed Mackay's hints about the crazy condition of the overladen vessel, and he reported that the pumps were daily required to discharge the water from the hold. This fact was, however, withheld from Miss Griffin and Minna, and it was hoped that, with fair weather, they might get through the voyage safely.

After some days they reached the latitude of Singapore, and all hoped that Sharp would put in to that port to repair, but the sordid American said,—

"Ay, ay, I guess you'd all like a tuck out of fruit fixings, but where would be the profit into my pocket? I calculate you'd take your feedings as freely at my cost, and I'd loss three days in pleasing your fancies."

"But then, sure, captain, my jewel," said Mike, "ye'd be gettin' the cracks in the hould stopped, and may-be the pumps might be liking to take a rest; and wouldn't the tay be getting harm down yonder, steeping in the could wather, seeing its more nat'ral for it to be in biling wather in the taypot altogether."

"Her timbers will hold together till we come to port," answered Sharp, "or nigh hand, anyhow, and if we're druv' to lower our boats, it'll be time enough when the old hulk is foundering, and I can come right slick up for my insurance. Mackay must see to his tea, when things run at the worst, I guess he'd kinder have insured it when he'd the chance."

"I'll hae it brought on deck, mon," said Mackay. "Whatna mean ye wi' this yaffering anent insurance, picking a man's pouch for a hantle o' tea. Gin ye're

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nae feared, I'se nae feared. Let the hands pu' hard at the pumps, and I trow we'll win through; what say ye, Tom, mon?"

"If I may say my say, captain," replied Tom, "I never had no matters of opinion of the *William* sin' we sailed. She's not seaworthy, she'll never stand a stiff gale, and I've my fears there's that as will try her over yonder."

Thick black clouds were gathered in the north, the air was close and sulphurous, then came the vivid lightning and loud thunder, still for some time the gale kept off, and the anxious watchers hoped the danger might pass away; but at length the hurricane came on, and tore away the masts and spars, while the heavy seas battered the crazy ship, and washed over the decks. The leak, in the mean time, hourly gained upon them, and the sea was too furious to attempt getting out the boats, and in terror and confusion two hours of tempest went over; then the gale subsided, and the boats were hastily lowered, for the ship was already sinking, and no time could be lost.

The passengers, without any baggage, were soon seated in one boat, while the two captains were still on the sinking ship, at high words respecting the property of Mackay, which he insisted on carrying off. The sullen American, whose freight was insured to its full value, cared little for the loss, but Mackay was determined, and, with the aid of Tom and Mike, he succeeded in lowering several of his chests into the long-boat, which contained the passengers, and the rest into the boat which took Sharp and himself, with the crew.

"Now, see ye, lads," shouted Mackay, from his boat, "that ye mind till my tea. I'll likely mak' ye a bit compliment if it be a' landed safe; sae mind till it, my hinnies. It's like I'll be a bigger sinner nor I thought on, or I'd niver lost sae mickle siller i' this voyage; God help me!"

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"Receive the warning, unfortunate man," said Mr. Sinclair solemnly; but away flew the long-boat, rowed by Tom, Mike, Frank, and Massee, and left the contending captains and the crew out of hearing; and the good man continued, with a sigh, "I would have gladly roused those mercenary men to a feeling of pious gratitude for their rescue from impending death."

"Arrah, thin, master," said Mike, "let 'em be. Wasn't it when the say was making a clane sweep of the decks, and a prayer was popping out of the mouth of every Christian sowl on board, that they were the haythens as were thinking more on their tay-boxes than their sowls. God forgive them!"

"Amen, Mike," answered Mr. Sinclair; "but let us not judge then uncharitably. God alone knows the secrets of hearts."

"Indeed, Mr. Sinclair," said Walter, "I don't believe Captain Mackay is a bad, dishonest man, like Sharp. He loves money too much; but he is faithful to his employers, and he wishes to repay their losses."

"Where are we going, Tom?" asked Frank. "We've the north-easter in our teeth; but shouldn't we try to work out of the Strait, and make to Singapore. I'd like to have a chance of seeing the royal tiger at large."

"They've thinned them chaps a good bit, Mr. Frank," said Tom; "and anyhow they're ugly customers to fall in with; but I stick to you, Singapore's the port for us, there's always lots of vessels lying in port, 'specially after a gale, and we may fall in for berths. Talk it out with Captain Madsimano, my lad."

Madsimano agreed to the plan, and even Sharp, when they hailed him for orders, said Singapore, for he could there prove the loss of his vessel, and obtain a certificate for his insurance; and after two days' hard labour, without food or water, they brought the boats round among the islets, and through crowds of strange vessels entered the bay; and saw before them, on each side of the creek, the low-built, busy, prosperous town of Singapore.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

A Cosmopolitan Hotel—The Indiaman to Calcutta—Mrs. Stuart and her Nurse—The Determination of Mike—The Malays in the Jungle—A Tiger Hunt—Frank's Victory—The Sun Birds.

THE boats of the *William* made their way to the landing-place, amidst a motley crowd of strange vessels the merchant-ships of commercial nations, the steamers of England, and such a large proportion of the junks of China, that the voyagers could scarcely believe they were not again landing in the Celestial Empire.

"This is distracting," said Miss Griffin. "Let us seek an hotel."

"Have we any money left, Miss Griffin?" asked Minna.

Madsimano's unfailing resources smoothed all difficulties; palanquins were again brought, and leaving Mackay and Sharp to look after the boats and the freight of tea, the passengers went forward to a commodious hotel, where, for exorbitant charges, they obtained accommodation. It was crowded with the passengers of several vessels, driven into the port by the late storm, more or less injured, for repair; and the ears of the newly arrived were greeted with the sound of many languages ringing through the wide passages of the spacious building, which was constructed to afford all the air that could be obtained in that burning region.

They were all nearly famished, and Minna inquired if they should be served with tea, as was the custom in

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China; but this was a cosmopolitan hotel. As soon as it was known that the new guests were British, a splendid breakfast was spread, after the European fashion: coffee, fresh bread, fowls, ham, delicious *côtelettes*, and piles of such fruit as can only be found in equatorial climes; all much to the admiration of Madsimano.

After all needful refreshment, the wanderers began to hope all perils were past, but the entrance of the two captains reminded them that they had still to seek their passage to India, which was not easy in their destitute position.

"It's no ways mateeral for me," said Sharp, "to be paying down cash for a passage to Calcutta, afore all's clean sattled about my insurance claim; and my men are blaring out about wages, and being paid off. Mackay has made his affidavy along with my crew; but I guess you womanfolks and lads as have been riz yonder away in the poor old country with lots of nonsense and niceties, would be again swearing as how the *William* were sound when we sailed, so we didn't trouble to call on any on ye. Our own folks sarved our turn. You paid me your passage-money, and passage you got, as long as my ship held together. The law itself asks for no more; so we'll strike straight, and set out in our different tacks."

Mr. Sinclair assured the man that they could give no evidence of the state of the ship, but such as must damage his case; for Tom and Mike had always been of opinion that the whole voyage had been one of danger.

"Well, then, ye needn't speak afore ye're asked," replied Sharp. "A close mouth keeps a chap out of mischief; so I'll bid ye good day, for the less we come together the safer it will be. Here's Mackay wants to be right slick away; he'll, mayhap, join your convoy."

They were not sorry to part with the over-reaching

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American, and, as soon as he left, Mackay said, "He's a bit owre keen, he is, yon Yankee fellow; but I tuik my oath for him, wi' a clear conscience, for I kenned nought amiss i' the *William* to signify mickle, till the gale catched us. But, hinnies, it costs a vast o' siller to keep here; will ye be for sailing sune? Yonder's a grand Indyman, bound for Calcutta, to weigh anchor in three or four days; but they're axing mair nor I like to put down for a berth. I'se be a puir mon again when I've gettin' a' paid. Ye'd aiblins like to hae a bit talk wi' Captain Wilmot yoursel, master. He's a rare proud mon, and has as mony grand words as the auld miss hersel'."

It was most desirable to secure, if possible, an immediate passage to Calcutta, and the generous Madsimano did not regard the expense. On making inquiries of the waiter, they ascertained that Captain Wilmot was then actually in the hotel, in the apartments of a lady, who was his passenger. Miss Griffin therefore, wrote a note to him, explaining the situation and the wishes of her party, and he called on them soon after; and, at the first sight of him, all felt satisfied that they were in the hands of a gentleman, who would assist and protect them.

They soon became acquainted, and Captain Wilmot offered at once to give them such accommodation as his vessel afforded, the best cabins being already appropriated to Mrs. Stuart, the wife of an English officer in Hong Kong. The climate not suiting her health, she was now on her way to Calcutta, to join her mother, and with her to proceed to England; and was accompanied by two children and servants. There were other passengers, chiefly military men, wounded or sick, on leave; but he promised to let his new acquaintances have two good cabins, and one inferior, for their attendants; and he courteously waived all arrangement of payment till they arrived at Calcutta, Mr. Thornville being well known to him.

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This was a charming prospect: Captain Wilmot was invited to dine with them, and he proposed at once to introduce Mrs. Stuart to his new passengers. They gladly accepted the offer, and the pale and delicate lady soon became on friendly terms with her future associates. She was also, at her own desire, made acquainted with Tom, Mike, and Massee, their faithful allies, with whom she was much amused, and she sent for her children to show them. When they were brought in by their pretty, modest nurse, Tom looked at her for some time with astonishment, then he said, "Are you Mary Heartley?"

"That is my name, sir," answered she, with a lofty air. "Pray who may you be that know me?"

"Don't ye mind, Mary, honey," said he, tenderly, "learning me to read my chapter, and me such a dunce! Oh, Mary! I could never forget thee! Cannot thou see as I'm poor Tom Heartley, the workhouse lad?"

"My poor dear brother Tom!" said Mary, melting from all her nursery dignity into a flood of tears. "Yes, I know you now; but how could I fancy my pretty little Tom could be changed into a tall, brown, bearded man like you. I've told you all about him, madam," addressing her mistress; "and you know the letters I've written to ask after him, and only got one answer, and that was to say he was a graceless, and had run away and got into bad courses, and was most likely either dead or transported. But you were never transported, were you, Tom?"

"Well, then, sister Mary!" answered he, "I never expected that from you. Ask all these gentry if I were ever like to that."

"He's one of the best fellows that ever lived," said Frank; "and if it hadn't been for his pluck, we'd none of us been here alive."

"I love Tom already," said Walter. "He was always kind to us in our trouble, and would never let

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anybody trample on us. I don't believe Tom ever was a graceless."

"You needn't all tell me that," said the weeping sister, "for I see it in his face. It's just what it always was—true and honest; only it looks foreign to be so covered with hair; and I shall be the happiest woman in the world if so be as Tom and I are not to be parted again."

"Why, as to that, Mary, dear," answered he, "you see we're not rated on the same ship, like; and then, you'll always be in the cabins, while I'll, maybe, be in the steerage. I'm up to any work on my own ground, from mate down to cabin-boy; but I'm not fit for a nurse, honey, and that's your line. But, thank God, we're come together again, and, as the valentine-verses say, 'We'll part to meet again,' please God. Anyhow, we're bound to Indy in the same wooden walls; and see, Mary, this here is Mike Ryan, my true friend and comrade, as knows you well, for oft has he said to me, there wasn't that woman living as he would wed till he'd had a look at my pretty sister Mary."

"And now he has set his blessed eyes on her swate face," said Mike; "Mike Ryan's the boy as says that same agin, and av' Mary won't take me, musha! I'll be turning nun, and marrying no other at all."

"There is no immediate occasion for so unusual a step," said Mrs. Stuart, smiling. "You must wait till Mary knows you, and you may prevail on her to save you. My little boy, who is very fond of ships, will be glad to be acquainted with Tom and you; and I am not afraid to trust my children and steady nurse with such faithful men. I dare say you will have much to say to each other, so Mary must invite you to her nursery."

After the nursery party had left, Captain Wilmot said, "How do you intend to amuse yourselves, young gentlemen, during your enforced stay at Singapore?—I will be glad to show you the busy town and its

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strange, mixed population, but it would not be prudent for you to wander about alone. The English part of the town may be safe ; the Chinese division is attractive, from its bazaars, but dangerous for its knavery ; and the Malay people, who occupy the third separate part, are certain to offer insult, if not violence."

"Do you think, sir," said Frank, "that there's any chance of our dropping in for a tiger hunt? We think it would be such jolly fun to see the old fellow that always looks so fierce in his cage run for his life before the hunters."

"But perhaps it would be the hunters that might have to run, Frank," said Mr. Sinclair ; "and there would be little fun in that."

"I know something of the practice of the dangerous sport," said Miss Griffin, "in India, where the tiger certainly is common. But, even granting the animal really exists in this place, it would be madness to attack it without elephants and the howdahs, in which you can sit in safety to shoot the fierce creatures."

"I wouldn't thank you for such cowardly sport," replied Frank. "I would give the beast a chance ; chase him as we do the fox, and have a good gallop after him."

"If you all ride well," said Captain Wilmot, "I think we might venture with good horses, trained dogs, and a posse of Malays to terrify the animal by the sight of numbers. But we must be well armed, and ready to gallop off if he faces round, for his spring is of tremendous length, and generally sure. We must, however, first inquire if a tiger has been heard of lately."

"I should be reluctant to believe such could be the case," said Miss Griffin. "How could the tiger even be introduced upon this island? It is not amphibious, to reach the place by water, or winged, to fly through the air."

"But I believe, Miss Griffin," said Walter, "the

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tiger is a good swimmer; and it is not unlikely that some hunted animal may have been driven to cross the water from the main land. Everybody agrees that, somehow, there are tigers here, and the wonder is, that the people don't destroy them all. Singapore is only about twenty-seven miles long, and eleven broad, and surely they might as easily be put an end to here as the wolves were at one time in England."

"There is a reward from Government for every tiger killed," said Captain Wilmot; "but so long as they do not enter the town, the busy inhabitants care little for the loss of a few labourers in the jungle. Each man is wholly engrossed in money-making, and the tiger does not injure his profits. The Malays, more intrepid, and greater sufferers than the townspeople, readily sally out to attack one that dares to approach their settlements; but though it is known that great numbers of men are annually destroyed by these fierce animals, no united effort has been made to lessen them."

Some hours after this, the two English sailors came in with a sad story. A party of Malays, cutting bamboos in a jungle not many miles from the town, happened to rouse a huge tiger, and saw it drawing towards them in a crouching attitude, preparing to spring. They all fled in terror, but, unfortunately, one young man, in his haste, stumbled over a fallen tree, and fell. His brother, seeing his danger, turned back to assist, but before he could get up, the tiger had raised its tremendous paw, and struck the fallen man on the head with such force that he lay senseless. Then the beast, seizing his victim by the shoulder, was dragging him off, when the brother hurled a spear, which pierced the animal in the side, and with a frightful roar, he dropped his senseless burthen, and turned to attack his assailant.

But by this time the Malays had taken courage,

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and turned back to aid their companions. They discharged a shower of spears at the enraged animal, which now sprung into the midst of them, overthrowing two men, its last mischief; for the Malays closed round and dispatched it with their spears. Then they raised their two fallen comrades, one of whom had his leg broken by the paw of the beast, the other was bruised, but still able to walk; the first victim they found was quite dead; his skull being actually broken in by the powerful blow. They dragged off the tiger with them, that they might claim the reward; but not before a rustling and a roar amongst the jungle had warned them that another of the monsters was hidden there.

"And all hands are to turn out to-morrow," added Tom, "to cruise after the enemy; and Mike and I'd like to lend a hand, if you don't object. It's long sin' we've heard the pipe to quarters."

"And maybe the young masters would be liking a taste of sport," said Mike; "and you'd be lending us, captain dear, guns and pistols, to let these same forrin bastes be feeling the smell of British gunpowther."

"We will all go, Mike," said Madsimano. "Captain Wilmot will tell us where we can get good horses, and an additional supply of arms. The sport will be new to me."

"Will it be the horses you're maning, captain," replied Mike. "Arrah! now then, see there; it's altogether unasy it kapes me to steer one of them same lubberly bastes. It's never anyways I'll get them to answer the helm. Arrah! isn't it the wather as is the finest ground of the world for thravelling, sure; and none of that rough sailing, up hill and down hill, and the stones, and the threes and the bushes. Musha! niver coming at all to the smooth wather to work your craft over."

"Ay, ay, captain," said Tom; "Mike's right:

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we'd soon be capsized on horseback. Next to sailing on a ship, I like to sail on my own legs."

So it was agreed that Tom, Mike, and Massee, with about thirty Malays, who were determined to clear the jungle of the dangerous inhabitants, should use their own legs; while Captain Wilmot, Madsimano, and the two boys, should be well mounted, to see the sport at least, if they did not absolutely enter into it, —for Mr. Sinclair earnestly besought Captain Wilmot to keep the boys out of danger.

They set out early in the morning, before the excessive heat rendered exertion laborious, and while the freshness of the morning air drew fragrance from every grove, and as they forced their way through thickets of the *Mimosa pudica*, the sensitive plant so admired in England, the quivering leaves shook on every side as if the plant was really living. They rode past the spicy groves of nutmeg, cinnamon, and cloves, fragrant oranges and limes, and whole plantations of pine-apples, where colonies of curious monkeys were feeding. They saw with wonder the large gardens so industriously cultivated by the Chinese, which supply the various vessels in the harbour with fresh vegetables. Beyond these gardens lay swamps and forests, and the monster-haunted jungles, where the tall bamboos sheltered the tiger and the venomous serpent. The Malays had brought trained dogs to beat the jungle and force the hidden tiger out, and at the spot where the tragedy of the preceding day had taken place, they all halted, and drew themselves up into a phalanx, bristling with spears; while rifles and pistols were ready for immediate use. Then they loosed the dogs, which spread through the jungle, smelling the ground, and quietly seeking the tiger. All waited, silent and anxious, for some minutes. Suddenly a single yelp, followed by the full cry of all the dogs, announced that the enemy was found, and this was succeeded by the angry roars of the tiger,

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and the howls of the worsted dogs. Loud and louder rose the cries, and the impatient Malays would have rushed on, but their leader, an experienced hunter kept them firm in their places, till the rustling of the canes warned them, and the next moment the tiger was seen to spring over the last of the dogs, and to crouch a moment before the formidable body of assailants. The word was given to fire, and a dozen bullets struck the beast, which with a frightful roar, bounded into the midst of the men, overthrowing several; it seized the horse which Frank was riding by the neck, and it fell with its rider, who lay with his legs beneath its body. But his arms were free, and with great coolness, before his friends could come to his aid, he had drawn a pistol from his belt, and aiming below the shoulder of the tiger, which still clung to the horse, he shot it to the heart, and it rolled over quite dead. Captain Wilmot and Madsimano, in great alarm, relieved Frank from the weight of the dying horse, and found him unable to move his legs, but in high spirits at his victory over the tiger.

"And it's you, yourself, Master Frank, they say as will be having the skin," said Mike; "and, sure, havn't ye arned it altogether like a haro, as you are—God bless ye!"

But even the prospect of the tiger's skin failed to support poor Frank, who fainted with pain as soon as he was raised to his feet. The men soon made a litter of boughs to bear him home, while the body of the tiger and the two surviving dogs were carried after him in triumph to the town, where they were received with cheers by the populace, who were very glad to see a slain tiger, though they did not like to be called on to be themselves the slayers. The reward due for the deed, Frank begged might be divided among the Malays.

The wounded boy was consigned to the care of Mary

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Heartley. No bones were broken; but the bruises and sprains would prevent him from walking for several days, to his great regret; for Walter and he had a plan of capturing a couple of monkeys to amuse them on the voyage.

"Never give a thought to that," said his kind nurse, "for our Tom is the very lad for running up trees after monkeys; and if it were to break his neck he'd do it for you or Master Walter, who have used him, poor fellow, as if he'd been a brother."

"We'd a right to do that, Mary," answered Frank; "for we might have been carried off for slaves, but for Mike and him. Tom is a real plucky, good-hearted fellow, and we can never forget him."

Though he was kindly tended, Frank thought it hard to lie all day on cushions, while Walter went out seeing the novelties of the town, and bringing in fearful stories of the tigers, which, like the dragons of old, required a new victim daily. It was, indeed, a lamentable fact, that on an average at least one human life a day was sacrificed to the plague of these ferocious animals.

"I was so delighted to-day, Frank," said Walter, "in one of the splendid flower-gardens, to see, as I thought, the real humming-birds; but Captain Wilmot says they are named sun-birds."

"The humming-birds," said Mr. Sinclair, "are *Trochilidæ*, and belong especially to America; these elegant little sun-birds, which glitter in the sun-beams like emeralds, topazes, or amethysts, belong to the tribe *Cinnyridæ*. The sound they produce is rather whirring than humming, as they hover gracefully over the flowers, to suck the honey, or feed on the minute insects. Wherever you see the loveliest and sweetest flowers, you are sure to find these brilliant revellers, enjoying the luxury of their existence."

Tom and Mike preferred the walk by the harbour, where they could look upon the crowds of foreign

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ships: Dutch and Spanish vessels from their respective settlements, English and American vessels for or from China, junks, Malay prahus of questionable character, steamers, merchantmen, and curiously-rigged boats from the islands, were all gathered in this great commercial emporium; and the British seamen exulted as they distinguished the unequalled vessels of their own nation, which, as Mike declared, "bate the world." They were especially pleased to see the *Hooghly*, the handsome Indiaman which was to be their home for some weeks, and in which they coveted a permanent berth.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

On Board the *Hooghly* — Madsimano's first Ball—Calcutta—Mrs. Stanley—Mr. Thornville—The Landing—Everybody's Story—The Future of the Schoolboys—Conclusion.

THE last coins in Miss Griffin's purse were expended in purchasing suitable dresses for herself and her pupil to wear on their entrance into Calcutta; and the liberality of Madsimano enabled Mr. Sinclair and his pupils to provide for the same occasion; and Mackay having secured a place for himself and his tea in the *Hooghly*, they prepared to depart, leaving behind them the crafty American, who still found some difficulties in obtaining the testimonials of his loss. "The fellows in the office," he complained, "are pretty considerably stiff, I guess; and if ye try to come round them with a small present, all their dander is riz up, and they

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run on about their honour and their duty. Honour never filled a man's pockets, I guess."

Very glad to have escaped the society of this scoffer at honour, the delighted party embarked with a "wilderness of monkeys," parrots, Java sparrows, and other curiosities of the Indian islands; and when Miss Griffin found herself installed in a handsome, elegantly-furnished cabin, she thought it time to celebrate her return to civilization by resuming her course of instruction to her somewhat reluctant little wild pupil. But when evening assembled the friends on deck, Minna was herself again, talking of her new home, begging Frank to get his ankles strong, for mamma often had balls; "and remember, Captain Madsimano," said the indulged little girl, "you must dance with me, though Miss Griffin calls me a child; you and I are such good friends."

Madsimano laughed at the idea of a nobleman and soldier condescending to dance; but Minna insisted on it, that he must learn to dance in India.

"I do not suppose Captain Madsimano can form any idea of a ball, Minna," said Captain Wilmot; "so if the ladies who honour me by making my ship their home do not object, we will show him, this very evening, that gentlemen do dance."

And so it came to pass that, in the delicious cool of the evening, an excellent band being on board, the passengers had a pleasant dance on the deck, in which even Frank contrived to hobble about a little; and after seeing Captain Wilmot dance, Madsimano, who was only looking on, no longer thought it could be degrading for a nobleman to move through the graceful quadrille or waltz.

Fair weather, pleasant society, and bright hopes, made the time seem short till they reached the shores of India, and the gallant ship turned into the mouth of the Hooghly, the branch of the sacred Ganges, to ascend to the City of Palaces, busy, populous, wealthy

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Calcutta, passing with anxious hearts, the graceful passage-boats, useful steamers, and proud ships at anchor.

"If papa should have sailed for England!" said Walter.

"If mamma should have gone to papa at Lucknow!" said Minna.

All were anxious—Tom and Mike to obtain berths in some good ship; Madsimano to know how to invest his Japanese money, to support himself and his humble attendant; Mr. Sinclair, for his future employment; and Mackay for the profitable sale of his teas: and when the noble city rose before them, emotion kept them silent for some time, then Tom said to his sister,—

"We'll have to part here, my girl; but maybe the mistress won't mind our looking in on you while we're seeing about for a job of work. I'd be glad to drop on a chance; for you see, Mike, man, we cannot live here by knocking down birds and cocoa-nuts. It's money as is needed, and that's hard to get."

"Musha! then it's thrue, that same," answered Mike. "Will we be spaking to Captain Wilmot himself? Sure, won't he be nading two nate hands next voyage; and one, maning myself, a rale illigant cook, aqual to fry a chop for her Majesty—God save her!"

It was Minna who undertook to intercede with Captain Wilmot, with whom she was an especial favourite, and to beg of him to be so very good as to employ her two friends in his ship.

"I am certain they are good sailors," added she. "Tom can do everything in the world: build huts, make shoes, cook, fish, or shoot; and then Mike is such a merry fellow, and his Irish brogue is so diverting."

"The testimonials would be scarcely sufficient for a board of examiners," said Captain Wilmot; "but I know something more of their professional qualifications,

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Minna, and I have for some time intended to engage them; so, bring Tom here, and I will set his heart at rest, he is worthy to be rated above a common sailor."

So Tom and Mike were from that day rated on the books of the *Hooghly*, the next voyage of which was to England; but, as it would not sail for two months, the men could have liberty to visit Mary, and see their old friends in the interval.

"Perhaps, Walter," said Minna, "one of those beautiful houses may belong to your papa. Wouldn't that be delightful?"

"Yes, Minna," sighed he; "but I wish I could meet him as happily as you will meet your papa. It is so very disgraceful to be a truant and a runaway."

"Look at the crowds of people," cried the excited girl. "Oh! Captain Wilmot, do you think there will be any one looking out for us?"

"I doubt that much, my dear," answered he; "but I am sending a boat ashore, so you must write to your mamma. Mr. Sinclair is writing to Mr. Thornville, at Walter's request, and, after they receive the letters, depend on it we shall soon have visitors."

Mr. Sinclair wrote to announce the arrival of Walter and his faithful friend Frank, assuring Mr. Thornville that they were truly penitent for their offence, for which they had been severely punished, and praying him to forgive them. And now the ship was decked out with colours, and the passengers dressed for the landing, which was so soon to be effected.

The first arrival was a boat in the evening, and it was Mrs. Stuart who claimed the visitors, crying out, as they approached, "It is dear mamma! and Berona too!"—and the babes were brought up to receive their grandmamma and aunt. Captain Wilmot welcomed Mrs. and Miss Stanley with politeness; and, after the tender meeting of the relatives, the friends of the voyage were introduced, and invited to make their

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home at Mrs. Stanley's villa; and Madsimano thought English ladies must indeed be charming if there were many like Berona Stanley.

Early next morning many anxious eyes were watching from the *Hooghly*, and, as one of the gay passage-boats drew near, Walter turned pale, and, grasping Mr. Sinclair's hand, he exclaimed, "It is he! It is dear papa! What will he say? What will he think of me?"

Miss Griffin took his other hand; but Minna sprang forward, as Captain Wilmot assisted a pleasant-looking man on board, and said, "Don't be angry with my dear brother Walter, sir; indeed he is a very good boy."

Mr. Thornville smiled as he stooped down to kiss the earnest little girl, and turned to hold out his hand to Walter, who could only sob out, "Papa! papa!"

"Well, my boy," said the indulgent father, "I wish you had been a little more patient under your trials; but you have had a severe lesson, and I trust you will never forget it. Why, you have grown a stout man; I should scarcely have recognized you if I had met you by chance." And Mr. Thornville looked with pride and pleasure on the tall, sunburnt, healthy boy, and thought that, after all, a year and a half of wandering life had not been without its benefits.

"And this is Frank, papa," said Walter, "who stood up for me at school, and has helped me through all the troubles of my hard life since."

"I had a good right to do that, Wally; for it was my bad advice that brought them on," said Frank. "Please, don't blame Walter, sir; he would have let them bully his very life out of him, if I hadn't urged him on to a start, and pulled him through—more shame on me. I was older and stronger than he, and might have been taken off alone, but I could not bear to leave the dear old fellow behind, to be baited by those brutal sneaks. He'll soon be up again in his classics,

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sir; he's not clever at his figures; but Mr. Sinclair hasn't let us be idle."

"I scarcely yet know all my obligations to Mr Sinclair," said Mr. Thornville; "but I feel they must be immense. I have much to learn, my boys, about yourselves and all these friends that you have been so fortunate as to make, amongst the most earnest of whom I must rank this little lady."

"What shall I do, sir," said Minna, "if you take Walter and Frank away, and my mamma has not come for me?"

On entering into explanations, Mr. Thornville informed Miss Griffin that Colonel Gayton's regiment was still at Lucknow, whither, he understood, Mrs. Gayton had at length, hopeless of seeing her daughter again, followed him; but he promised to send off despatches immediately with the joyful news, and, at present, Miss Griffin and Minna must make his house their home.

"And Madsimano and his servant, papa, and our faithful Tom and Mike?" asked Walter.

"My house and my heart are large enough for all, my boy," answered Mr. Thornville; and he urgently pressed all the companions of his son to accompany him. Mackay, thinking this opportunity favourable, stole quietly up behind Walter, and said in a low tone,—

"Anent them bills, my gude laddie. It's not for ane o' the Mackays to be ca'd dishonest. I'se forthcoming, ye ken, mon; but I'se hae to sell my tea, and then, ye can tell the gude mon, I'se ca' on him and hand owre the balance due."

Walter gave Mackay his father's address, and promised to explain the awkward transaction. Then Captain Wilmot engaging to join them as soon as his landing was accomplished, the happy party embarked in Mr. Thornville's elegant boat, much amused with the solemn, dark boatmen, in their white cotton dresses and turbans, seated cross-legged on the deck.

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These men looked so much like automatons, with their immoveable faces and mechanical movements, that Minna asked if they were really alive.

On landing they found a handsome barouche waiting, with four horses and black postillions in muslin dresses and turbans, and other servants in attendance. Mr. Thornville procured palanquins for Mr. Sinclair and Miss Griffin, his unexpected guests; the boys, Madsimano, Minna, and himself, went in the carriage, and the men followed with his servants. A pleasant drive brought them to the large villa of Mr. Thornville, standing in its garden-like grounds, amidst plantations of mangoes, tamarinds, and all the delicious fruits of India, mingled with shrubs of unequalled beauty and fragrance; while fountains of falling water cooled the air, and the green Venetian blinds of the windows promised a shelter from the noonday sun, now blazing over them.

What a pleasure it was to be ushered into the spacious, cool, marble hall, with the punkas, the luxurious divans, and the table spread with delicious fruit, while iced sherbet and lemonade were brought in to refresh them after their drive.

"Oh, Walter, how different this is to our dreary cage-prison in Japan!" said Minna. "Is it not pleasant, Captain Madsimano?"

"All around me is charming, Minna," answered he; "but to me the greatest charm is that freedom which allows the mind to be at peace. It was the desire to attain this perfect tranquillity that induced me to abandon my native country. Mr. Sinclair has pronounced my flight excusable; and I trust when Mr. Thornville hears my story he will not blame the step I have taken."

But it was a whole day before Mr. Thornville became acquainted with everybody, and heard everybody's story; and several days elapsed before he could determine what was best to decide on for the benefit

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of everybody. By that time Colonel and Mrs. Gayton had arrived, and were admitted into council.

"Listen to me, Thornville," said the colonel. "I have got my leave, and intend to return to England with Wilmot; I think these two boys should certainly be sent to school again, and I am willing to take charge of them. I warn them that I am a strict disciplinarian, and shall always keep my eye upon them; for I should fear that if they took a fancy to abscond a second time, they might carry off my wild little girl with them again."

"Oh, papa!" said Walter; "we will never disobey you again; but, please don't send us from you yet; and not to that hateful Merton."

"Certainly not to Merton again," answered Mr. Thornville; "and if I can induce Mr. Sinclair to take up his abode permanently with me, I hope he will undertake the charge of my two boys for a year, after which, it is my intention to visit England, where I hope to find a school to place them in of a superior class to Merton. I look upon you, Frank, henceforward as my son; but I must see your uncle; I must not steal you. And if, my dear boy, you should prefer my counting-house to the university, I will place you in a position to climb the ladder to fortune."

"I should like to be with Frank too, papa," said Walter; "I could not bear to be parted from him. I know a good deal about spices and cottons; and Frank could do the sums, for Cameron was so harsh, I never could get on with figures."

"But if you wish to become a merchant, Walter," said his father, "you must not leave the 'figures,' as you call the important financial department, entirely to Frank. You must try to comprehend the nature of commercial transactions, and acquire a practical knowledge of the machinery. We will consider these plans over during your year of probation, only remember to be obedient, industrious, and true; and to

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believe that your father and your teacher are your best friends."

Frank was overcome with joy and gratitude at his rescue from neglect and unkindness, and he assured Mr. Thornville that to be a merchant was the height of his desire, and to live with Walter would be the happiness of his life.

"And couldn't Captain Madsimano be a merchant too," asked Walter.

Madsimano shook his head: his habits and his tastes were not mercantile.

"No, no," said Minna, "Captain Madsimano must stay with us. Papa, will you make my dear Madsimano an officer?"

"That is not in my power, Minna," answered he; "but since Captain Madsimano is already the soldier of an empire that we hope will soon be in alliance with us, I do not think we shall have much difficulty in procuring him a commission in an English regiment, which shall if possible be my own, for Mrs. Gayton and I can never forget his friendly offices to our lost child, and our friend Miss Griffin."

"I shall be glad to accompany you to England," answered Madsimano, "and to take the necessary steps to enable me to rank among the defenders of that brave and enlightened nation. Mr. Thornville's friendly offices have been successful in procuring me for my Japanese money and valuables, ample funds for myself, and my attached servant; and he has afforded me a hope that if a treaty be formed between our nations, proposals shall be made for my unknown offences to be looked over, and a power granted me to draw my rents. To Japan I can never return but as a visitor; I have all my friends, and my home, far from it."

It was discovered that Mrs. Stanley and her daughters would also return to England with Captain Wilmot, an arrangement very agreeable to Madsimano, who had become daily more attracted by the charming

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Berona Stanley; nor did her mother object to his country when she learnt he was noble, and beloved by all who knew him for the amiable qualities of his heart and mind.

"If you please, Mr. Frank," said Tom, "I've come to report as how Captain Wilmot, as might be full admiral if he'd his due, has rated me on the *Hooghly* as second mate, and Mike, here, as is a fair hand at working the coppers, is to be second cook."

"Blessings be about him intirely," said Mike. "Wasn't he sinsible of the friendship Tom and I were houlding for iver; let alone pretty Mary—and she sailing in the same, and saying quite tinder to me, 'Mike, I reckon a second cook no degradation;' and she all the time head nurse. Musha! Master Frank, haven't I got hould of the sow's ear, at last."

"Not meaning Mary's ear, I hope, Mike," said Frank. "Not by no manes," answered he; "it's an illigant ear, is her ear altogether; but see there, will I not be bothered with joy! Sure it were a lucky day when we gave the slip to that rogue, Moody, off the coast of Africa, and went off a fortin-hunting along with you, my boys."

"Then, Master Walter," said Tom, "there's your father as has behaved grand to cunning old Mackay. When he druv up with his prize-money to offer to pay off his balance as he reckoned it, he drifted away with a long yarn about his losses, and as how he couldn't pay up to his people. Then what says your governor yonder, but tells him to keep all the money to cover his losses, and he and Captain Madsimano makes him out a paper to certify to Van Hookems what he'd gone through to save his ship. So like enough they'll place him in another, and it's to be hoped God will give him grace to be a bit more open-handed. For I take it, proud as he was of his cargo of honesty, he sailed as close to knavery as a man can well do and save his freight."

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It was not long before the truly-attached voyagers were separated to fulfil their respective duties; and though they grieved much to part, they were cheered by the hope that they should soon meet again, when the school-boy follies would be forgotten; but the memory of their wanderings preserved as a lesson to quell impatience and rashness, and a bond to bind them closer together. While to all these tried friends of adversity, their adventures would prove a confirmation of the truth that no people can be enlightened and happy who are not blessed with the knowledge of Christianity—the freedom of the children of God.

THE END.

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